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NGC™
ISSUE #75
CHRISTMAS 2002 / £3.50
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MARIO PARTY 4
THE ULTIMATE CHRISTMAS KNEES-UP!
'Tis the season to be jolly! Nintendo's multiplayer extravaganza reviewed!
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ゴジラ目撃！

速報！

## ゴジラ目「！






キック、パンチ、ジャンプ、その他のミサイル技や防備といった破「技能に加え、凄まじいコンボシステムや、オリジナル映「での各種怪「「特の特殊攻「技を「見しよう。



**4 PLAYER FIGHTING MAYHEM**




世界支配をもくろむ地球外生物は、「に地球に降りたち、いまや地球資源をうばい、人間を奴隷化しようとしています。彼らはマインドコントロ「ル光線で、ゴジラの永遠のライバルたちをまんまと支配しています。

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ATARI



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**INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING**
30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW
Tel: 01225 442244
Email: ngc@futurenet.co.uk

**EDITORIAL**
**Santa** Jes Bickham
**News Elf** Geraint Evans
**Reviews Editor** Martin Kitts
**I Am Gnome** Dan Geary
**Art Editor** Justin Webb
**Deputy Art Editor** Paul Edwards

**CONTRIBUTORS**
Sarah Kennett, Kieran MacDonald, Mark Walbank, Steve Jarratt, Tom Mayo, Zy Nicholson, Phil Mlynar, Laura Sheppard

**PRODUCTION**
**Senior Prod Co-ordinator** Kirsty Bell
**Production Manager** Rose Griffiths

**CIRCULATION**
**Product manager** James Greenwood
**Circulation manager** Regina Erak

**ADVERTISING**
**Key Account Manager** Phil Chagrin Jones
**Classified Sales Executive** Tom Farrer
**Deputy Advertising Director** Jayne Caple

**PUBLISHING**
**Senior Editor** Sean Atkins
**Group Art Editor** Ian Miller
**Publisher** Nick Stevens
**Mmmmm** Nick Stevens
**Promotions Manager** Tamara Longden
**Overseas Licensing** Simon Wear
**Publishing Director** David Roberts

**SUBSCRIPTIONS & DISTRIBUTION**
Future Publishing Ltd, FREEPOST BS4900, Somerton, Somerset TA11 7BR.
Tel: 01458 271184

Distributed through the UK newstrade by Seymour Distribution, 86 Newman Street, London W1P 3LD.
Tel: 020 7907 6000

Overseas distribution by:
Future Publishing Ltd. Tel: 01225 442244

Printed in the UK by TPL Ltd









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# MERRY XMAS!

Thanks to the wacky world of deadlines and magazine publishing, we're currently writing this, the Christmas issue of **NGC**, in early November. Not to worry, though – the festive spirit hasn't been hard to drum up, thanks in part to Geraint's whale-like caroling and the bottle of cooking sherry Dan keeps in his desk, but it's mainly due to the veritable avalanche of games that's hit us. It really *has* been like an early Christmas.

## WE GOT GAME

And while Nintendo themselves might not have a big game out close to yuletide (aside from *Mario Party 4*, which arguably only works when four people are playing – see Steve's review on page 28 for all you need to know), with *Mario Sunshine*, *Eternal Darkness* and *Starfox Adventures* on the shelves, they're not lacking for big names. And importantly, the Gamecube has simply got tonnes of third-party software available for it, and the list is growing all the time. Just imagine the same stage of the N64s lifespan – the situation was utterly different, and not a little depressing. But things are faring better now, and Nintendo have undoubtedly taken heed of the mistakes they made in the past. Which is very good news for all of us – but especially you, the paying customer, who now has more choice than ever.

## ONWARDS

So we think it's been a pretty successful year, all told – but what does 2003 hold? Bigger and better things, undoubtedly, with the arrival of *Metroid Prime* and *Zelda* in PAL territories, to name but two big-name games – and **NGC** will be there all the way, ready to meet your every need. So we want to know exactly what you think of the magazine, what you like, what you don't like, and what you want to see introduced. Drop us a line at the email address below and let your brains flow.

And so it only remains to say this – have a brilliant Christmas!

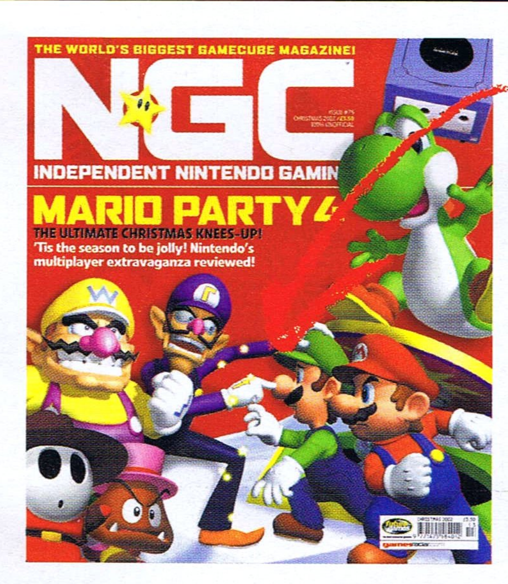
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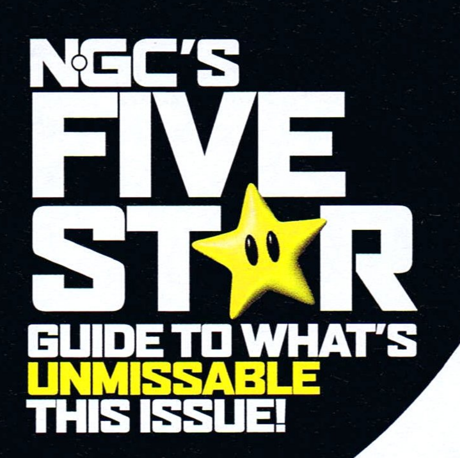
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*For five of the best things in this sensationally seasonal issue of* **NGC**!




# WHAT'S IN THE MAG?




**GUIDE TO WHAT'S UNMISSABLE THIS ISSUE!**




## MARIO PARTY 4

Like an S-Club party – but without the pop stars. Oh lovely Tina!




## NIGHTFIRE

James Bond returns in an all-new adventure. Better than *Agent Under Fire*? Or not?




PAGE 34





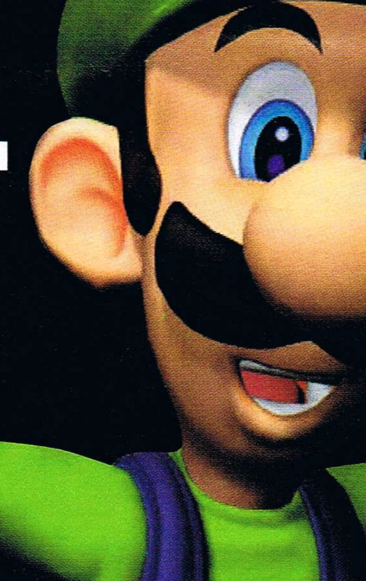



# MARIO PARTY 4

PAGE 28

**REVIEWED AND RATED!**

Nintendo's multiplayer funbag hits the UK! We tell you everything you need to know...



**MEET ENJiKi**

*Before we slipped the pillow over Tim's face, he whispered this: "Take good care of Enjiki". So of course we have – and she's here to take good care of you. You'll find here introducing the different sections of the magazine, in a much more photogenic style than, say, Jud's hairy chin, Dan's peat-sodden head, or Martin's cold, dead eyes.*

*We've got big plans for Enjiki in the future – but how do you see her role evolving within the magazine? Drop us a line at the usual address.*




## CLONE WARS

Your clones are very impressive, as Ewan McGregor so beautifully said.




## TONY HAWK'S 4

He's back! For a fourth time! It's *Tony Hawk's 4*!

4
PAGE 64




## MARIO TIPS

Every last blue coin accounted for. There are 240 of them. This took a lot of effort, y'know







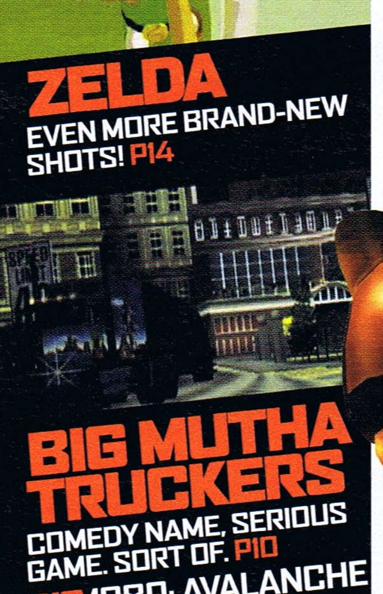















△ Look! It's a wee beastie! By the time you read this, we'll be playing the American version of the game. Hurrah!




△ The weapons are varied and exciting – and dead useful.




△ The variety of locations are stunning indeed – this canyon area is home to feisty insectoid beasties.



△ The architecture is great.



△ Samus in all her glory.

**SHOTS GALORE!**

*Feel the power, not the width, as we unveil even more brand-new shots of the astounding Metroid Prime. And come back next month for the definitive review...*

# METROID

## Who needs *Perfect Dark Zero?* This is all the blasting and adventuring you'll need for a long time...

Excitement doesn't even begin to describe what we're feeling about *Metroid Prime*. As we approach the game's 18th November US release date – and we'll be bringing you a review in the next issue of **NGC** (on sale 20th Dec) – Nintendo have unleashed a marketing blitz for the game, with a multitude of promotional videos rubbing shoulders with a very professional commercial, shot by none other than noted director Alex Proyas (who's got films such as Dark City and The Crow to his name). The net result is that even more details of the game have been uncovered (although, of course, Nintendo are being canny enough to keep the finer points under wraps). And to be perfectly frank, *Metroid Prime* is looking astonishing.

And we wouldn't have said that a year or so ago. Early glimpses of the game were distinctly underwhelming, and internet scuttlebutt hinted at many difficulties with developers Retro studios, who despite being touted as 'the next Rare' and becoming a Nintendo second-party developer, had all of their other games canned or shunted onto the

Samus' Stateside return is just *so* close...

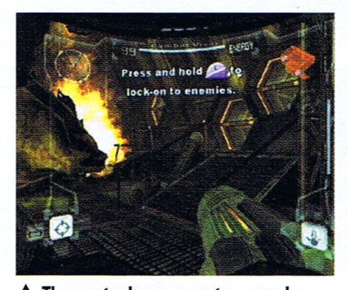
△ Not all of Samus' weapons are used offensively; this ice beam, for example, can be used to freeze enemies but also has an effect on the environment. Quite what use freezing this area has is as yet unknown. It's bound to be surprising, though.



△ Gorgeous, gorgeous guns. Gorgeous.



△ A big damn explosion goes bang.




△ The controls are sure to provoke comment – but in a good way.



△ Cut-scene mania from our friends at Retro Studios. Soon, dear readers...



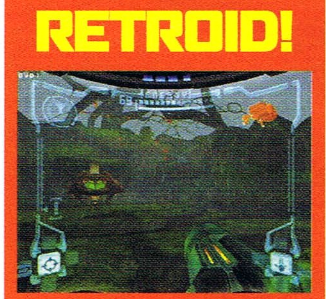
△ Look! A big boss – it had to happen, but it looks amazing. AMAZING.



△ More tip-top scanning action from the masterpiece-in-waiting that is *Metroid Prime*. It's going to be like *Zelda* – but with guns and sci-fi sensation. Gibber!

# PRIME

## RETROID!



**Brilliant news! Complete *Metroid Prime* once, link it up with *Metroid Fusion* on the GBA, and you will unlock the original NES *Metroid*! You'll even be able to save your progress onto the Gamecube's memory card. Amazing. But the fun doesn't stop there – you can also import Samus' Fusion Suit from the GBA to the Cube version – quite what effect this will have, other than a cosmetic one, is unknown at the time of writing... but we're sure it'll be a surprising one. Retro heaven, indeed.**

back burner (*Raven Blade*, even after a much-talked about E3 2001 demo, was scrapped completely).

But with Nintendo's input, Retro have succeeded in making something hugely promising. So, yes, it's a 'first-person adventure', a genre mix so compelling and complex that it can't be adequately summed up with a pat phrase like "it's *Zelda* meets *Perfect Dark*". But the game allegedly presents you with a whole world to explore – it loads continuously, and isn't just a collection of levels (meaning that the various different environments we've seen must reside in specific geographical areas).

There's also a lovely 3D map that you can zoom right into, so that you can plan more than just a top-down route through a given level.

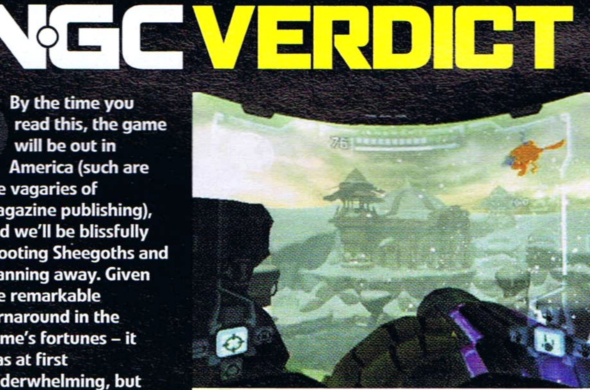
Such attention to detail and obvious care is everywhere – even the Game Over screen is thrilling, with Samus' viewscreen shutting down, and then the camera panning to a cracked faceplate, with blaring klaxons and 'Life Support System: Critical' messages.

At the time of writing, no PAL release date for *Metroid* has been confirmed – but we'll be raving over the US version next month, and we're expecting an announcement soon.

> **"...ATTENTION TO DETAIL IS EVERYWHERE – EVEN THE GAME OVER SCREEN IS THRILLING..."**

## NGC VERDICT

**By the time you read this, the game will be out in America (such are the vagaries of magazine publishing), and we'll be blissfully shooting Sheegoths and scanning away. Given the remarkable turnaround in the game's fortunes – it was at first underwhelming, but now looks like an absolute classic – we're frankly dribbling at the prospect of *Metroid Prime*. Rumour has it that the game offers around 30 hours of play time, but given the ridiculous claims about *Starfox*'s lifespan, we're looking at about 15-20, we reckon. More than enough for some top-notch sci-fi blasting fun. And given that the emphasis is as much on exploring as shooting, we're expecting plenty of secrets to uncover. Now if only we had a PAL release date...**



| UK | US | JAPAN |
|---|---|---|
| TBA | 18TH NOV | 2003 |

### WHAT WE WANT TO SEE INCLUDED

- *Zelda*-style exploration and secrets galore. Things to find that are completely unconnected to the main quest, but that will offer hours of fun.
- No separate levels, just one seamless giant world. This has been hinted at by Ninty, so fingers are definitely crossed...
- We want it to be *eerie*. *Super Metroid*, in particular, was splendidly creepy...

### ANTICIPATION RATING






5



**METROID FACTION!** In the first *Metroid*, our heroine Samus Aran fought the deadly Space Pirates and their boss, the insidious Mother Brain. We know Space Pirates are in *Metroid Prime*, but is their leader?

## HELLO RAYMAN!

We travelled to Paris to join the circus and get our grubby hands on the latest version of Rayman's Gamecube debut. Rayman's very big in Europe, you know.



### THE KNOWLEDGE

- Ubi Soft's limb-free mascot returns for another helping of Gallic platform adventuring.
- Enhanced lock-on feature for accurate shooting of enemies and rings.
- Race bumper-cars made from Rayman's shoes.
- Turn Rayman's head into rotor blades to be able to fly up vertical levels.
- Shooting and skating sections as well as the usual platform stuff.

### THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- Rayman 2 (NGC/35)

A first excursion into 3D for the platform hero who began his career on the Atari Jaguar.






△ Master of all he surveys (assuming he can defeat the Hoodlums and save Globox).



△ These armoured dudes have to be tackled in stages. Get them to expose their midriff, then launch a quick attack to the gutbag.

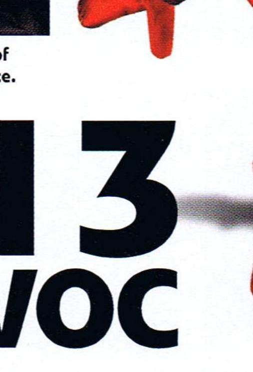
△ Skating on the old light beams calls for seriously intense concentration.



△ Sniped by a Hoodlum. There's a different technique for offing each type of villain.



△ Oooh. The crystal castle is made up of layers of glowing particles, and looks ace.



# RAYMAN 3 HOODLUM HAVOC

## The fist-firing, hair-twirling hero counts his Gamecube blessings.



Believe it or not, work on *Rayman 3* started almost immediately after the N64 game *Rayman 2* had been completed, meaning it's been in the works for a massive three years.

And as you'd expect from a series noted for its graphical prowess, it looks extremely slick. The gameplay picks up where the previous title left off, with huge levels filled with stylishly designed enemies and rock-hard pieces of precision jumping.

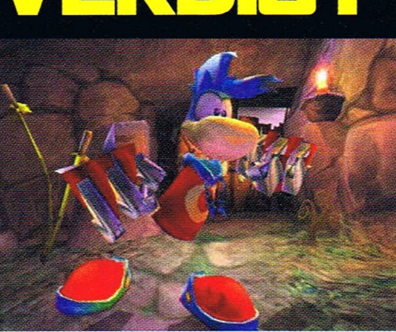
One section sees Rayman attempting to leap to the top of a tall tower, via a series of 120 vanishing balloons, to escape a rising pool of lava. Another involves skating across beams of light while psychedelic motifs pulse away in the background. Even the *Rayman 3* staff had difficulty completing it.

But easy games can be more of a disappointment than extremely hard ones, and *Rayman 3* looks set to bolster the limbless wonder's reputation as the platform hero of choice for those folk who like their games a little more heart-thumping than most.

The outstanding visuals are ample reward for mastering Rayman's new set of moves (including a funky power suit with spiked gloves). And having seen the game running on every format, we'd say the Cube version is the pick of the bunch.

### N·GC VERDICT

The preview version we've had a crack at was pretty much what we'd expected from Rayman. Fast action, excellent graphics, and an unusually high difficulty level (but it's not quite as tough as *Rayman 2*). Rayman's games are an acquired taste that, admittedly, we've never had, but for fans of the series (and there are loads of them) this third instalment may well prove a more attractive proposition than any platformer short of *Super Mario Sunshine*.



| UK | US | JAPAN |
| --- | --- | --- |
| MARCH | MARCH | TBA |

**ANTICIPATION RATING**







## WHAT THE TRUCK?

Trading and racing together at last, in an 18-wheeler that doesn't suck! We've got our hands on the latest build of this intriguing concept – and it works like a charm! Get all skinny on this long-hauler below.




△ Get that authentic truck cockpit view – does not include pizza boxes or jazz magazines, sadly.

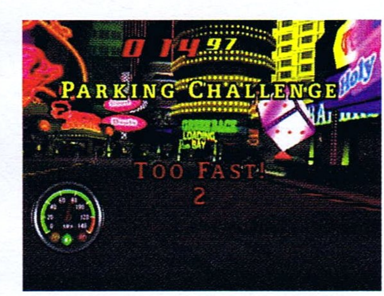
△ Handling these beasts with a heavy load can be very difficult.




△ Each character plays pretty much the same way, although their rigs are wildly different.




△ Figure out the best items to sell on.




△ Earn extra cash with the parking trials.



△ Bars are a great source of information.

### THE KNOWLEDGE

- Drive 18-wheel monsters across America in an attempt to earn as much cold, raw money as possible.
- Fully customise your 'rig' in the garage using the paint tools, as well as upgrading your trailer to accommodate more expensive cargo.
- Get to your designated destination on time, and try to avoid the police and biker gangs who attempt to confiscate your load.
- Trade goods from each city in an attempt to make a whopping profit. Hang around in bars to get all the best info on the hottest deals.

### THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- Racing games (various)

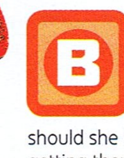
**PlayStation/PS2**

This is developers Eutechnyx first game for Ninty. They've a good track record, though.

# BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS

## Helping toothless hillbillies haul ass across the US of A…



Big Momma's looking for someone to take on her haulage business, but which of her no-good cracker-redneck kids should she hand it over to? By getting them to compete in some 18-wheeler racing and trading, she'll be able to make up her mind.

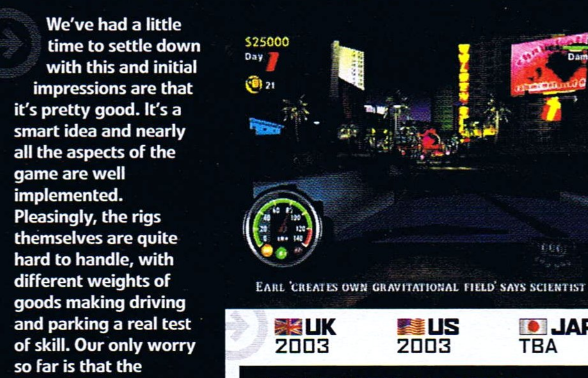
Half *18-Wheeler*, half *Elite*, this is a racing and trading game with a difference. Taking place in an 'open' game world, you have to haul your rig across the country, lugging various goodies to different cities in order to make a profit. Basically, it's a case of 'buy 'em low, sell 'em high'. To help give you the edge, you can visit bars in each city to listen to gossip about what to buy where, and where to sell it. The more money you make, the bigger trucks and rigs you can buy to allow you to haul more expensive booty.

Of course, it's not quite as easy as that. You can take part in different challenges, such as racing with rival truckers or delivering goods without taking a single hit on the road – just to make things even more tricky, you'll have the cops on your tail dishing out fines and confiscating expensive illegal cargo, as well as biker gangs, who try to steal your more valuable booty.

It's certainly an intriguing premise, and from what we've seen so far, it's all very enjoyable. More soon.

## NGC VERDICT

**We've had a little time to settle down with this and initial impressions are that it's pretty good. It's a smart idea and nearly all the aspects of the game are well implemented. Pleasingly, the rigs themselves are quite hard to handle, with different weights of goods making driving and parking a real test of skill. Our only worry so far is that the environments may not be as big as we think – so the game's longevity could be in question. Full review next issue.**




Earl 'creates own gravitational field' says scientist

 UK 2003
 US 2003
 JAPAN TBA



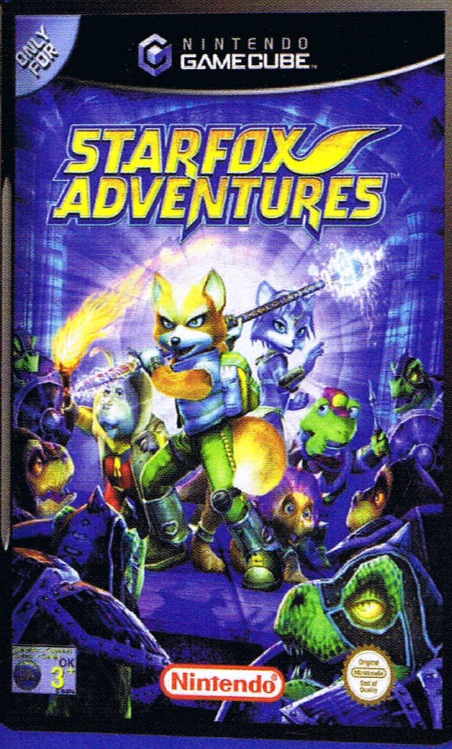
### ANTICIPATION RATING

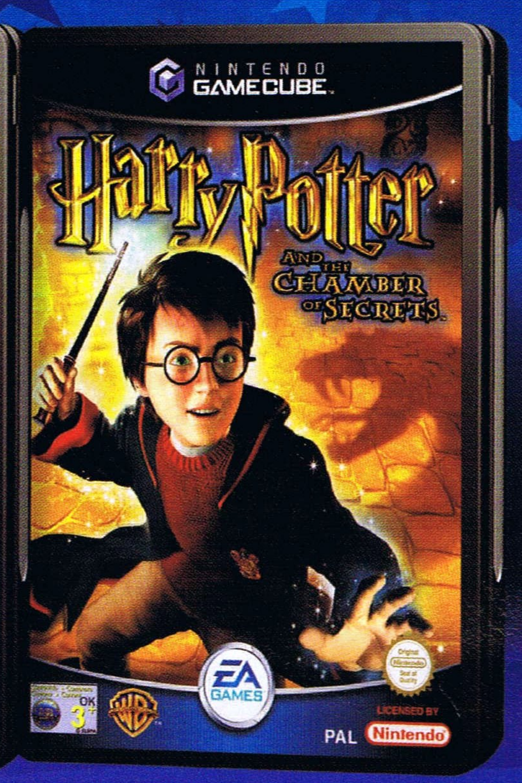
    

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△ Falling off stuff means you have to wait ages for your rider to get up.



△ The multiplayer is shaping up fairly nicely. Worrying frame-rate, though.



△ There are different particle effects for different types of snow. Eskimos would approve…



△ Try not to stop to admire the scenery, or you'll fall off the peaks…



△ Icy paths make you go faster, but if you're not careful, it's cold facepack time…



△ You'll encounter some interesting (and interactive) bits of scenery on your travels.



△ Tricks are a big part, but this is more of a racer than *SSX*.

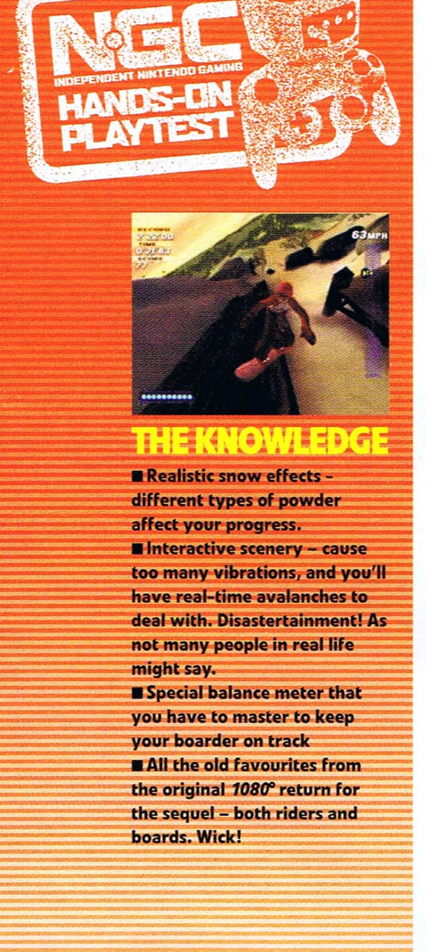
# 1080°: AVALANCHE

## Be the *flairman* of the *board*… (yak!), with Ninty's own-brand *SSX*-'em-up.

You'd think after the tense, pant-spoiling none-more-extreme sports experience that was *SSX Tricky*, other developers would hang up their Carhartt beanie hats and get back to work on *Dave Smith's Pro Street Lugist 4*. But it's a different story with *1080°: Avalanche* – after a shaky start, the project passed on to NST, with Ninty themselves steering the title away from direct competition with *SSX* into a more serious, sim-style snowboarder.

That's not to say it won't offer some of the same zany stuntage as that title – the original *1080°* on N64 offered a detailed, yet highly playable experience, and *Avalanche* looks set to become more than just a boring, serious alternative to *SSX*. The actual mechanics are based on real physics and proper gravity, though – like the original, there aren't any stunts you couldn't pull off yourself with a board and some snow. There's also real-time weather that affects your boarding progress, and the enormous mountain environments aren't just scenery, either – smack into that tree too hard and you might just trigger an avalanche, comprising of rocks, houses, and one of the many different types of realistically-rendered, real-time snow. Yikes!

Balance and timing also play a large part. Pull off a duff landing, and your boarder does some comedy arm-flailing – to prevent an embarrassing wipeout, you need to equalise the balance meter that appears at the bottom of the screen. Nice – we'll have more as we get it.





### THE KNOWLEDGE

- Realistic snow effects – different types of powder affect your progress.
- Interactive scenery – cause too many vibrations, and you'll have real-time avalanches to deal with. Disastertainment! As not many people in real life might say.
- Special balance meter that you have to master to keep your boarder on track
- All the old favourites from the original *1080°* return for the sequel – both riders and boards. Wick!

### THIS LOT ALSO DID…

- **Wave Race: Blue Storm (NGC/68)**
Top-notch, rock-hard jetski simulator that launched with the Gamecube.

### NGC VERDICT

***Avalanche* is very much in the spirit of the original *1080°*, offering an alternative to the outlandish, Newton-defying stuntage of *SSX*, but with fun still a factor. Concern has to be raised about the frame-rate, though – 30 per second is pretty disappointing for a racing game. There's also evidence of some ropey textures. Still, you can't argue with the franchise's pedigree – if it's anywhere near as good as the first one, we'll be signing up.**



| UK | US | JAPAN |
|---|---|---|
| TBA | APR 2003 | 2003 |

**ANTICIPATION RATING**: 4 (1 2 3 4 5)







△ The combat system remains unchanged from *Ocarina of Time* – and that's just fine by us, as it works supremely well.

## NGC IT'S ALMOST HERE!

**Released in Japan on 13th December, Zelda is almost with us – check out these latest shots and drool!**



△ We'd wager that this gentleman will be selling you equipment.



△ Squeezing into small holes and wriggling around is useful.



△ The shadows suggest evening.

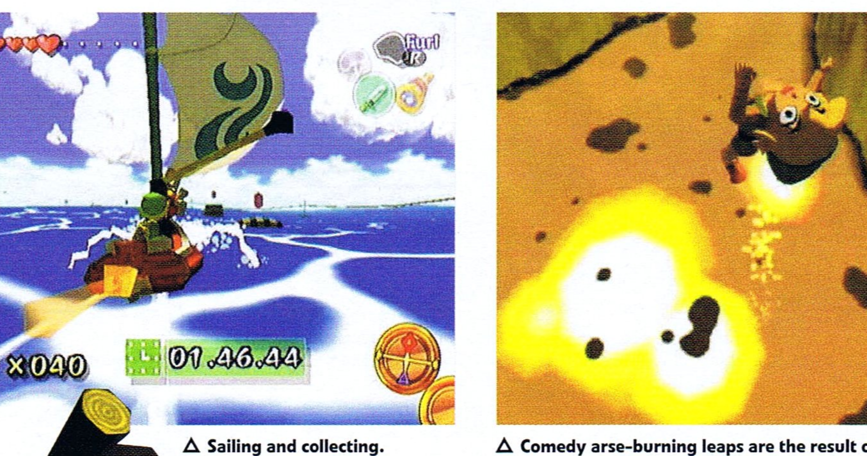


## THE KNOWLEDGE

- **The latest in a line of classic Nintendo franchises to appear on the Gamecube – we've already seen *Super Mario Sunshine*, now it's Link's turn.**
- **There's a huge emphasis on emotional interaction, made possible by the expressive, cartoony visuals. it's not 'adult', but it's certainly impressive.**
- **A world made up of islands, reached by anticipating the strength and direction of the wind. Crazy…**

## THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- **Super Mario Sunshine (NGC/73)**
Astoundingly inventive 3D platformer, starring everyone's favourite plumber.
- **Luigi's Mansion (NGC/67)**
Short but lovely.




△ Sailing and collecting.

△ Comedy arse-burning leaps are the result of lava-dunk.

# THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

Link's back! Ready to save the world and his little sister – with a bit of help from the wind…



Another month, another batch of new *Zelda* screenshots, and several more pints of drool start to drip from our collectively gaping gobs.

It's hard to believe that there was ever an uproar about the cartoony visuals of the new *Zelda* – while the quasi-realistic looks of *Ocarina of Time* lent an air of gravitas and real-world believability to proceedings, the wonderfully expressive details on show here make for a more emotional experience. And more humorous, too – we've seen some

## PORKERS!



**We surmised last issue there might be an spot of pig-hunting, similar to *Ocarina's* Cucko collection, in the new *Zelda*. New footage shows Link catching porkers for an old lady, who rewards him with gifts depending to how many he grabs.**

"The wonderfully expressive details… make for a more emotional experience."



△ This is how Link gets from island to island – by dragon-faced boat. Yes.




△ Link's sword-swing returns.



△ Watching the mailbox won't stop the postman nicking your Xmas cash.



△ The giant evil bird that spirits Link's sister away – you can tell it's evil as it has no pupils. And glows from within with an unearthly greenish light. Nasty.




△ The cartoon look is perfect for expressing emotion – see the rage in his eyes and he swings his sword. Fesity fella, ain't he?



△ Explosions merit that magical swirling smoke and dust – brilliantly stylised, it is.




△ It's simply almost too gorgeous to comprehend.

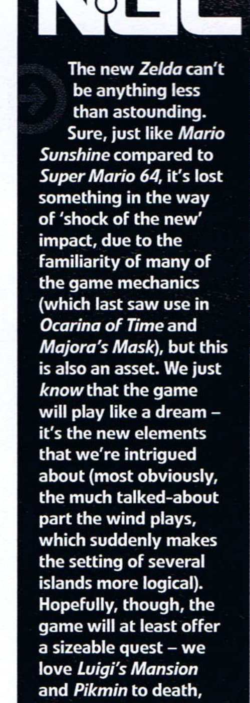
great comedy moments with Link's changing expressions, something that wouldn't be possible with the same visual style as *Ocarina*. It's also chock full of incredible, throwaway details, too – the gorgeous curlicues of smoke and dust, for example, when you destroy an enemy or a door slams. And all of this is only from the few early levels that Nintendo have deigned to show the public – just imagine what kinds of visual magic the rest of the game holds…

The game's also got a proper name – *Winds of Takuto*. As discussed in last month's news, the 'gimmick' of this year's *Zelda* seems to incorporate the movement of air – apparently the direction and strength of the wind changes as the day progresses. Presumably, then, certain areas will only open up for certain periods, as Link travels by means of sail-boat, and there'll be an element of strategy in visiting the various islands, similar to the way you had to plan your day around the relentless march of time in *Majora's Mask*.

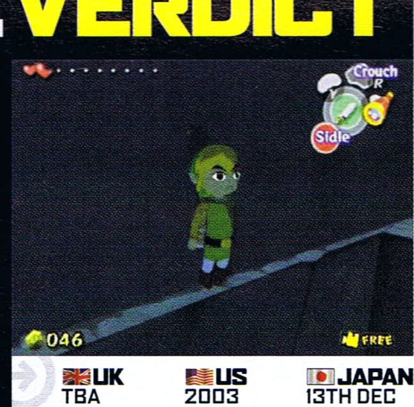
But at the moment, this is still more conjecture than fact – one thing's for sure, though, we'll know a lot more when the game is released in Japan on 13th December. Imagine that – a new *Zelda* game, less than a month away. Expect an exhaustive import review very, *very* soon.

**"IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THERE WAS EVER AN UPROAR OVER THE CARTOONY VISUALS"**

## NGC VERDICT



**The new *Zelda* can't be anything less than astounding. Sure, just like *Mario Sunshine* compared to *Super Mario 64*, it's lost something in the way of 'shock of the new' impact, due to the familiarity of many of the game mechanics (which last saw use in *Ocarina of Time* and *Majora's Mask*), but this is also an asset. We just *know* that the game will play like a dream – it's the new elements that we're intrigued about (most obviously, the much talked-about part the wind plays, which suddenly makes the setting of several islands more logical). Hopefully, though, the game will at least offer a sizeable quest – we love *Luigi's Mansion* and *Pikmin* to death, but something with a bit more heft would be nice – and previous *Zeldas* have always been long and involved.**




UK TBA | US 2003 | JAPAN 13TH DEC

### WHAT WE WANT TO SEE INCLUDED

- A giant, epic quest. Sure, the premise – Link's sister is kidnapped – seems of less import than the time-spanning earlier *Zeldas*, but we've crossed our fingers.
- Freedom! Mini-quests! Something like the Skulltula hunt… more to do than the disappointingly pedestrian and linear *Starfox Adventures*, anyhow.
- Gerudo Fortress-style stealth sections.

### ANTICIPATION RATING




**SURFER/FARMER?** Link isn't the only one getting pally with porcines. Paul recently announced he is keeping pigs himself. Yessss… Now all he needs is a banjo.

Free-form killing in the most un-childish Cube game yet…

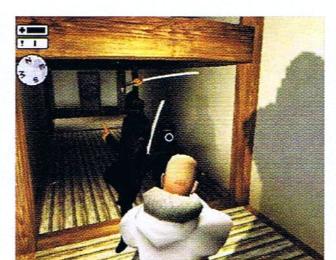
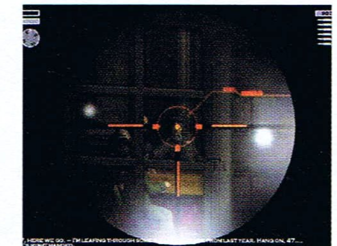
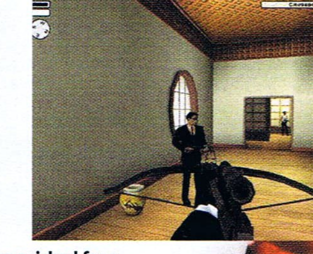




Luckily, nobody noticed the strange, bald waiter slipping poison into the ambassador's champagne.



This bloke will have a shootout almost anywhere.

There's a massive variety of weapons you can steal from the bodies of your vanquished foes.

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING HANDS-ON PLAYTEST

### THE KNOWLEDGE

- Created by Danish developer Io Interactive, with console versions in mind. It isn't a fiddly PC port.
- 19 assassination missions set across six countries.
- Collect weapons and hang them on the walls of your shed.
- Spare the lives of minions or waste 'em all 'by accident'. The choice is yours.
- Non-linear missions with multiple ways of achieving your goal.
- Silent Assassin rating for skilled players. Mass Murderer rating for nutters.

### THIS LOT ALSO DID…

- **Hitman: Codename 47 (PC)**

Io's first game had a much less forgiving difficulty level, and no mid-level save feature. Rock.

# HITMAN 2 SILENT ASSASSIN

## Leave your morals at the door, in this outstanding murder sim…



The chart-topping, face-rocking, spectacularly non-linear hitman adventure is on its way to Gamecube. Thank goodness for that.

For those who haven't played one of the other versions, it's all about thinking your way around some very clever levels in order to assassinate your target and escape without being noticed to collect your blood money.

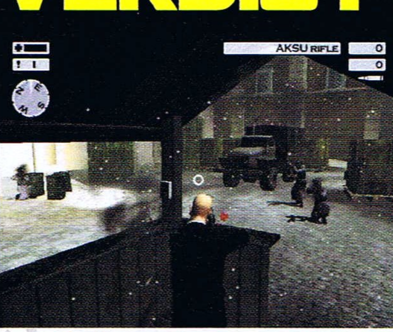
There are loads of ways to tackle the task at hand. You could steal some clothes as a disguise to get close to the victim, poison his food, use a sniper rifle, plant a bomb, or employ countless other possible courses of action. It's like a supremely violent Mario game, as far as freedom to do your own thing goes.

Bodies stick around forever, and you'll have to drag them into a quiet location (such as down a manhole) so nobody stumbles across them and raises the alarm. The whole thing can be played in first- or third-person mode, and can be approached as a straight shoot-'em-up or a stealthy bit of *Metal Gear Solid*-style sneaking. Or a mixture of the two.

Despite the levels being packed with enemy factions and civilians, it all moves at a flawless 60fps on PS2. Expect more of the same, with better textures, from the Cube version.

## NGC VERDICT

Having played the excellent PS2 version to death, we can safely say that this is going to be a welcome addition to Gamecube's roster of top titles. Our only reservation has to be that since the game has already shipped over a million copies on other formats, the belated Cube version might not cause as much of a stir as it deserves to. Still, if they can add some new features and clean up a handful of stray bugs, it'll be well worth playing again.




UK SPRING | US SPRING | JAPAN TBA

ANTICIPATION RATING






**DID YOU KNOW?** The other versions of *Hitman 2* feature a monument that looks remarkably like a Sikh holy shrine. After complaints from Sikh groups, the offending building will be redesigned on Gamecube.

"Standard stuff, but at least it's fast and smooth."

# ATV2

## Off-road racing, quad-bike style.



Acclaim's *ATV2*, the sequel to a game nobody in the office has ever seen, is an arcade-style quad-racer affair – checkpoints to add time, stunts for bonus points and so on.

Standard stuff, but at least it's fast and smooth. We've blasted through the first set of courses in the preview version we've been playing, and while the floaty handling of the quad bikes takes some getting used to, it allows you to do *Excitebike*-style things such as pulling a wheelie at any time, which is useful for getting a speed boost off the top of a jump.

It's out soon, and hopefully we'll review it next month.



△ **It's possible to shoe the other racers off their machines, a bit like *Road Rash*.**





**OUR PROMISE**
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# NEWSDESK



## IN NEWS THIS MONTH



# NINTENDO FINED GC2 CONFIRMED

## IT'S BEEN A MONTH OF UPS AND DOWNS FOR NINTENDO... BY JES BICKHAM

So you thought that games were expensive in Britain? Think again. It would appear that we've had it easy compared to the rest of Europe, where prices of games during the '90s were rather higher than those enjoyed by us. And it was apparently Nintendo's fault.

The European Commission this month found Nintendo guilty of trying to rig the videogame market by keeping prices artifically high in some EU territories, in the period 1991 to 1998. As such, the company was fined a whopping 146 *million* euros – apparently the fourth-highest fine ever imposed by the commission for a single offence – for being "the driving force behind the illicit behaviour". Ouch.

### NAUGHTY NINTY

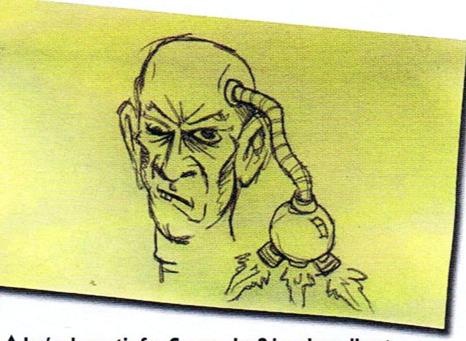
Basically, the situation boiled down to Nintendo preventing distributors from selling goods from lower-cost countires in states where prices were higher. (So, for example, if prices were high in, say, France, distributors wouldn't be able to get cheaper stock from Italy, or wherever). Apparently some prices were up to 65 per cent higher in Germany and Holland than over here. Yikes.

The fine was meted out after a two-year investigation, and some distributors were also charged 21 million euros.

Nintendo issued the following statement concerning the whole affair:

"30th October 2002 – The European Commission has today levied a fine on Nintendo Co, Ltd of Japan and Nintendo of Europe.

The Commission has found that certain of Nintendo's distribution practices in Europe in the period up to 1998 did not comply with EU competition rules. In particular it



△ Jes' schematic for Gamecube 2 involves direct cranial insertion. Now you can play hands-free!




**NGC ONLINE**
Unfortunately, we're not getting our own forum any time soon, but Future Publishing's very own games site, Games Radar, provides an excellent place for you to provide us with feedback and criticism – and the NGC team will be checking the Radar forums regularly. Head to www.gamesradar.msn.co.uk and click on Forums to join up.

**WHO ARE WE?** This month's news is written and researched by Jes Bickham, Geraint Evans and Martin Kitts. While Martin and Geraint are polar opposites – Martin is brutish and bristly, while Geraint is pale and sickly – they're jolly good chums. Aaah.

## NUMBER CRUNCHER

In his speech, Peter Macdougall said many things – and a lot of those things concerned the games market as a whole, proving that the industry is becoming more profitable by the year, and seemingly immune to other economic fluctuations – for instance, in 1997 American companies has collectively sold about nine million console systems. Currently, the corresponding figure is closer to 15 million. MacDougall points out with other data that this means people are sticking with videogames – and that "a lot of people in the '80s who enjoyed *Duck Hunt* on the NES never put down their controllers". The upshot of this is that there are more older gamers with disposable cash around nowadays – a point lending much import to Nintendo's giant marketing spend on *Metroid*, their first really big 'mature' game.

Curiously, MacDougall underlined his comments with the phrase "this holiday season is going to be, in a word, gangbusters". We're not sure what this means, but it sounds good. We think.




△ **The nexy Ninty console, in Geraint's world. Utter rubbish.**

has found that Nintendo restricted parallel trade within the EU.

The decision relates to an investigation process that ended more than two years ago. Since then, the decision has been delayed by internal Commission procedures.

Nintendo co-operated fully with the Commission's investigation and, following an internal review launched in late 1997, voluntarily provided much of the information relied on by the

## "NINTENDO PREVENTED THE SALE OF GOODS FROM LOWER-COST AREAS IN HIGHER-PRICED ONES"

Commission in taking its decision.

Nintendo accepts the finding that, up to 1998, its distribution practices did not comply with EU competition rules. Nintendo has rectified the relevant aspects of its distribution in Europe and has instigated a thorough and far-reaching compliance programme that enables the free flow of product across Europe.

Nintendo has accounted for the decision in its previous planning, so there will be no impact on its business and financial performance this financial year. However, in view of the size of the fine, which Nintendo finds surprising, it will lodge an appeal."

Lucky Nintendo have got plenty of money from the Rare sale, eh?

△ **Dan foresees a Tiffany lamp design for GC2 – both practical and attractive.**

### BACK TO THE FUTURE

In brighter news for our favourite games company, Peter MacDougall (Nintendo's executive vice-president of sales and marketing) made a speech at the Gerard Klauer Mattison conference in New York. The conference was an investors-only affair, but McDougall's speech was full of optimism and interesting tidbits concerning the future of Nintendo.

Much was made of sales figures and other such numbers – many statistics concerning the amount of gamers in the US, their ages, and the relative health of the market (which is proving resilent and recession-proof) were trotted out, and gave the impression that Nintendo is doing extremely well – especially with cashflow workhorse the Game Boy Advance.

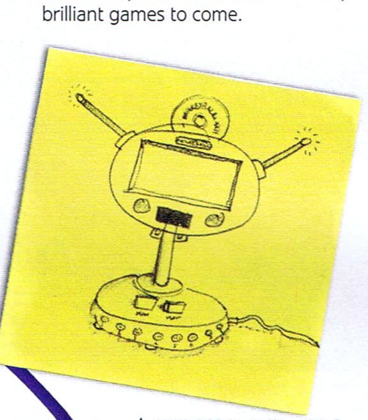
The GBA was confirmed as the fastest-ever selling games console, and last year, an incredible 19 million GBAs were sold worldwide. That's an astounding figure – and given the increasing amount of games that link up with Gamecube, we're bound to see some of that insane popularity rub off on GBA's big brother.

But the intriguing news of the speech concerned, of course, Gamecube. Not content with confirming games such as *1080°: Avalanche* and *Zelda* for early 2003 US releases, MacDougall also said, "you'll soon see exclusive *Final Fantasy* games playing on Nintendo systems again". He also admitted Ninty are taking the 'adult' market much more seriously, with *Metroid Prime* ushering in a new era of heavy marketing for more mature games. Indeed, *Metroid* is the recipient of their largest game-specific budget in over three years. That it's being spent on something that's not typically Nintendo in tone speaks volumes.

But despite all such heartening news, here's the crux of the matter: "Nintendo is in the software business – to stay. Nintendo is in the handheld business – to stay. And Nintendo is most certainly in the home console business – to stay. Work is well underway on the successor technology to both GBA and Nintendo Gamecube."

This would appear to scotch any and all rumours concerning a move by Nintendo into the software-only business once Gamecube runs its course. It's anybody's guess as to what form the 'successor technology' to Gamecube will take – but don't go thinking your Cube is obsolete, as it has at least five years of life left, and many brilliant games to come.

△ ***Metroid Fusion* – along with *Metroid Prime*, the first of Ninty's new, mature direction.**



△ **Will GC2 look like this? Paul thinks so. Prune.**

△ **Gamecube/GBA connectivity is a big part of Nintendo's future plans.**

## SHORT CUTS

### ABC CORRECTION

**An article in our October issue stated that NGC's sales figures for a single issue have been audited and that these showed that NGC's circulation exceeded that of its competitors in the Nintendo magazine market. ABC has asked us to point out that NGC has not had an ABC single issue audit and that the claim to be the highest circulating magazine in the Nintendo sector is not supported by ABC data.**



### SAM'S SERIOUS

**Brilliant news! In a recent interview, Croatian developers Croteam mentioned that they are currently hard at work on a Gamecube version of their hectic blaster *Serious Sam*. Originally released on the PC, *Serious Sam* turned out to be an entertaining successor to *Doom* – namely, it was a fast-paced FPS that hurled loads of monsters around on-screen at the same time. It didn't take itself too seriously, either, and was plenty of fun. No release date has been set yet, but expect Take 2 to handle publishing duties. More as we get it.**

**FREE WAVEBIRDS!**
Ever seen that funny bit of paper in the boxes of first-party Nintendo games that lets you go online and become a Nintendo VIP? Doing so earns you 'stars', and you can redeem these for gifts. Well, Nintendo have just upgraded the whole shebang – get enough stars and you'll be able to earn yourself a free Wavebird, or other worthwhile gifts. And frankly, that's great news. Head over to www.nintendovip.com for more details.

"A 60fps, effects-laden beast of a game"

**DISAGREE WITH MOST WANTED?** Then email us at ngc@futurenet.co.uk or write to us at NGC, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW and tell us the three games you're most looking forward to. Every month, we'll tally up the scores on the doors and change the list accordingly.




The 25 games you've been eagerly rubbing your thighs over for the last 30 days…



## THIS MONTH

Flip all the way back to page six, if you haven't seen it already, for our final set of *Metroid Prime* preview shots before next month's review. We're taking bets on what the 'surprise' will be at the end of the game. Ten quid says Samus takes off her suit and reveals herself to be a ladyboy. Or maybe not.



## 1 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

UK TBA | US SPRING | JAPAN DEC

December 13th. It's a Friday, of course, and it's when Link's latest adventure is set to hit the streets in Japan. Honestly. As for when we'll see it over here, you can take the 'spring 2003' US date, multiply it by a factor of Nintendo, and call it 'late summer', we reckon. Keep on drooling, or buy an import Gamecube if you can't wait.



## 2 METROID PRIME

UK 2003 | US NOV | JAPAN 2003

We're not sure how it's going to play as a whole, having only got our hands on the first level so far, but if you're after something to show off your Gamecube's graphical power to your mates, look no further. It's a 60fps, effects-laden beast of a game, and (slippage permitting) we'll review it next ish.



## 3 MARIO KART GC

UK 2003/04 | US 2003/04 | JAPAN 2003/04

Ahh, *Mario Kart GC*. This was shown on a Spaceworld trailer a couple of years ago, and we haven't heard a peep out of it since then. Rumours have included online compatibility and even that the game would be Rare's now-canned *Donkey Kong Racing*, with Mario characters slotted in. Ha!



## 4 F-ZERO GC

UK 2003 | US 2003 | JAPAN 2003

This Sega-developed racing sequel is shaping up to be something special. Very much in the style of the N64 version's '1000mph traffic jam', involving jostling your way through a huge field of aggressive competitors, but now with some impressive background graphics to distract you from the track.



## 5 RESIDENT EVIL ZERO

UK NOW | US NOW | JAPAN TBC

Two characters, hundreds of zombies, and not a great deal of ammo to waste them with. The same brand of super-realistic backgrounds seen in the first *Resident Evil*, with a a couple of new additions to the gameplay – switch between characters at any time, and drop items anywhere.



## 6 SOUL CALIBUR 2

UK TBA | US TBA | JAPAN TBA

Possibly still on course for a 2003 Gamecube release, or possibly not. It all depends on whether Sony or Microsoft (or even Nintendo) have slipped Namco a large brown envelope stuffed with cash in order to secure this incredible beat-'em-up as a time-limited exclusive for their own platform.



## 7 ANIMAL CROSSING

UK TBA | US NOW | JAPAN NOW

The next time somebody tells you your room looks like a pigsty, take it as a compliment. Living like an animal is one of the most rewarding experiences you can have with your Gamecube, and now that the Americans are enjoying it so much, we'd all like to join in the fun in this country. Pleeeeease.



## 8 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

UK 2003 | US NOW | JAPAN NOW

An online *Gauntlet* in 3D is perhaps the best way to describe Sega's much-loved Dreamcast title. On Gamecube you'll get the two original DC versions, along with extra levels to explore, and the chance of playing with the wonderfully bizarre hybrid keyboard-joypad combo. See last issue for more.



## 9 MARIO TENNIS

UK TBA | US TBA | JAPAN TBA

We don't know anything about this tennis game right now. Nobody does. Except for the fact that it exists, and is currently in development over at Camelot, the same talented studio responsible for the original N64 game , plus other top stuff like *Golden Sun* for the GBA and *Mario Golf*.

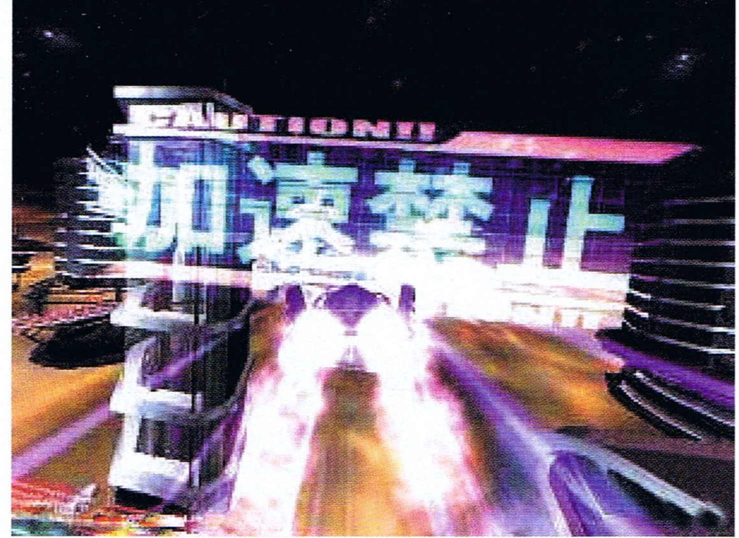


| # | Game | Description | UK | US | JAPAN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | HARVEST MOON | Farming RPG, now in proper 3D. | TBA | SPRING | DEC |
| 11 | STARFOX ARMADA | Namco's Foxy arcade shooter. | 2003 | 2003 | 2003 |
| 12 | FINAL FANTASY | The Chronicle of the old Crystals. | 2003 | 2003 | 2003 |
| 13 | MARIO GOLF | Let's hope it's still in the works. | 2003 | 2003 | 2003 |
| 14 | 1080°: AVALANCHE | Super snowboarding sequel. | 2003 | 2003 | 2003 |
| 15 | PRO EVO SOCCER 2 | *FIFA*-thumping Konami footie sim. | TBA | TBA | 2003 |
| 16 | XIII | Cel-shaded first-person shooter. | 2003 | 2003 | UNLIKELY |
| 17 | DRIVER 3 | Top-secret car theft and crime. | 2003 | 2003 | 2003 |
| 18 | MORTAL KOMBAT | Spine-ripping fatalities ahoy. | 2003 | 2003 | 2003 |
| 19 | CONFLICT: DESERT STORM | Saddam-baiting Clancyalike. | 2003 | FEB | TBA |
| 20 | STARCRAFT GHOST | *MGS*-ish third-person shooter. | 2003 | 2003 | 2003 |
| 21 | IKARUGA | Awesome shooter from Treasure. | 2003 | 2003 | 2003 |
| 22 | RAYMAN 3 | Quirky French platform fun. | MARCH | MARCH | TBA |
| 23 | BROKEN SWORD 3 | Adventure and intrigue. Yep. | 2003 | 2003 | 2003 |
| 24 | DRAGON'S LAIR 3D | Long-awaited retro update. | 2003 | 2003 | UNLIKELY |
| 25 | ONIMUSHA 3 | Unconfirmed Capcom threequel. | TBA | TBA | TBA |

WRITE TO… MAILBOX/NGC/30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK

**DID YOU KNOW?** After creating the *Shining Force* RPGs for Sega consoles and *Hot Shots Golf* for the PlayStation, crack Japanese development studio Camelot Software Planning signed a deal with Nintendo. As well as the Mario sports games, the company is thought to be working on a Gamecube RPG.




△ Ignore the road signs and put your foot down – this is *F-Zero GC*.



△ We've seen that robot with the red eyes somewhere before. Rubbish, he was.

# F-ZERO

## The 1000mph traffic jam is back with a vengeance. Time for some road rage...

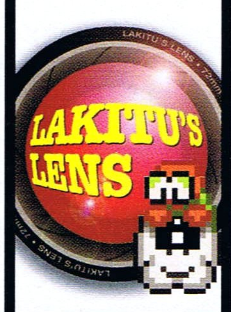
When we heard *F-Zero GC* was being created by Amusement Vision, the Sega team behind such rock-solid titles as *Super Monkey Ball* and *Daytona USA*, we knew it was likely to be every bit as good as one of Nintendo's in-house efforts.

But just look at these screens! It's amazing! There's a huge amount of background detail, from the shimmering lights of the cities below the track, to pointless but pretty objects such as a giant model of R.O.B., the thoroughly useless robot bundled with the deluxe version of the NES console.

Gamecube plainly has power to burn when it comes to rendering this sort of thing, and of course it all moves at the essential super-silky frame-rate we expect from the *F-Zero* series.

One thing that's a little disappointing is that the current version appears to have only 30 vehicles on the track, the same as *F-Zero X* for the N64. While that's more than most racers, and probably plenty to be getting on with when you consider the average race lasts less than two minutes, we had kind of hoped to see upwards of 100 cars zooming around. Things may well change by the time the game is released, which is expected to be some time around next April in Japan.

An arcade version will follow shortly afterwards, with a built-in Gamecube memory card slot so to allow the swapping of as-yet unspecified data. Hazarding a guess, we'd say it's likely to be tracks and vehicles created on the home version. This way the arcade machines could have an ever-changing, user-created section, with the most popular user content featuring in a top 100 list. Or something. Whatever it is, Sega's arcade specialists are the people you'd trust to get it right.




**SPOTTED MARIO ON A MAKEOVER PROGRAMME? SEEN 'SMASHED PIKMIN' ON A COOKERY SHOW? LET LAKITU KNOW!**

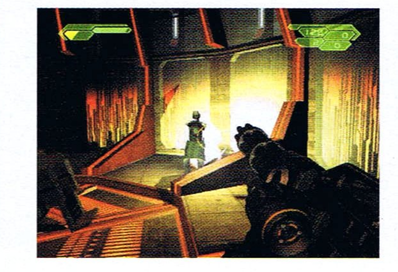


### BACK IN THE USSR

Top marks to Darren LeWarne for sitting through the miserably unfunny Police Academy VII: Mission to Moscow (Tagline: Kicking buttski, making you laughski, the academy is backski). Darren's torture paid off though, as he spotted a pre-Jedi Christopher Lee scraping the bottom of the career barrel in this Game Boy-holding cameo. Closer inspection of the pic reveals the machine isn't actually turned on, but something is clearly amusing Mr Lee. Whatever it was, it couldn't have been any part of the script.

**WRITE TO LAKITU'S LENS, NGC, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW**

*Entries sent with picture evidence will win a Gamecube game*





# MACE GRIFFIN

## The bounty hunter revealed on Gamecube.

Jango Fett not enough for you, bounty fans? He was certainly more than enough for Geraint (see below). But anyway, here are a couple of tasty Gamecube shots of *Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter*, a combination of first-person shooting and intergalactic space combat.

It's developed by Manchester-based Warthog Entertainment, and promises an 'epic' story to back up the technical gubbins such as lifelike AI and a 'rag doll' physics system that makes enemies fly backwards when shot, hitting walls and crumpling like, erm, rag dolls.

We'll do a proper preview next issue. It's due for release next March.

# VIRTUAL REALITY

**NINTENDO GAMING MOMENTS 'COME TRUE'.**

**THIS MONTH** Why it takes a lifetime of training to become a Jedi...



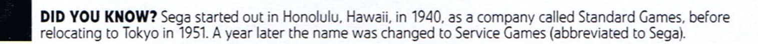
### THE TEST

**He's got the cloak. He's got the lightsaber. And he most certainly has the attitude, honed on the mean streets of Carmarthen. "Come on then, Jango! Let's get it on, you pot-bellied gimp!"**

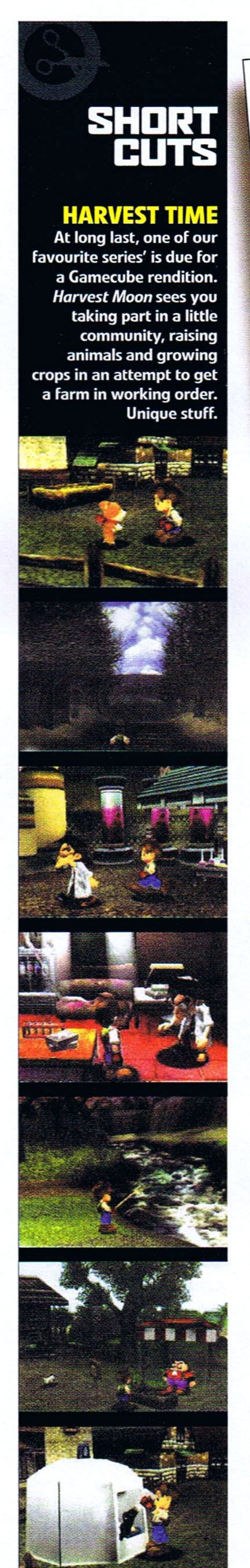


### RESULT

**Sadly even a cardboard cut-out of Jango has too much know-how for our Jedi novice from the valleys. It's going to take one heck of a proctologist to sort out this terrible mess.**



**DID YOU KNOW?** Sega started out in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1940, as a company called Standard Games, before relocating to Tokyo in 1951. A year later the name was changed to Service Games (abbreviated to Sega).



## SHORT CUTS

### HARVEST TIME

At long last, one of our favourite series' is due for a Gamecube rendition. *Harvest Moon* sees you taking part in a little community, raising animals and growing crops in an attempt to get a farm in working order. Unique stuff.



△ Cheap, low in quality, paper-thin and utterly pointless. The stickers aren't bad, though. WAH!

# STICK 'EM UP

## Join us and laugh! Laugh in the face of tangled joypad leads! Oh yes.

Ever settled down to a session on *Timesplitters*, nipped out for a crafty cider break, and returned to find your pads in a horrible tangled mess? No? Oh. Anyway, these handy pad stickers will let you know who's pad belongs to who, and which port they're jammed into. No more confusion and no more sleepless nights for everyone. Aren't we kind.

We've also made some GC button and memory card stickers too. Cool, huh?

# EVIL GALORE

## Loads of *Resi* goodies… for FREE!

Courtesy of the kind folk at Pathe Distribution Ltd, we've managed to get our hands on five bundles of *Resident Evil* merchandise to coincide with the film's release on the 23rd of December.

Winners will receive a copy of the DVD, the Slipknot single, 'Plague', that's featured in the film's soundtrack, a *Resi* T-shirt and a wallet.

All this stuff can be yours! Just answer this simple question…

How many *Resident Evil* games has Jill Valentine appeared in?

Answers on a postcard to: Crimson Headed Love Machine, **NGC** Magazine, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW.

The first five from the bag win the goods. Oh and you must be over 15 to enter. If you're not, we'll phone your mum and get her to beat you. HARD.






**HIGH FIVE**
In a recent interview with Capcom producer Atsushi Inaba, he stated that Capcom would continue to strengthen their support of Gamecube with a further five titles over the coming year – all of which are currently in development. A further announcement was scheduled just after we went to press so we'll have more next ish.

**NINTENDO'S 'BIG BOMB'**
Rumours are currently running rife that Nintendo are set to drop a big announcement on the gaming world. Current theories doing the rounds concern the supposed entry with the Japanese Patent



# WAS SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE A FAILURE FOR NINTENDO?

One week, 300,000 units, and a controversial stealth-shooter later, and Mario had slipped from the lofty heights of the number-one spot, to the lower end of the top ten. This was Mario. *Mario*, for crying out loud – the world's most recognised videogame character, who starred in some of the world's greatest-ever games. So why has *Sunshine*, undoubtedly one of this year's best titles, underperformed?

The simple answer to that boils down to PS2's massive install base. Currently nudging the three million mark in the UK alone (and probably surpassing it by the time you read this), it's still out selling Gamecube by a whopping margin of (on average) around six units to one.




## THE NUMBERS GAME

Looking at it in terms of percentages, though, and *Sunshine* didn't do badly, with 25 per cent of GC owners picking up a copy over the first few days of launch. What's even more impressive is that during its initial release, sales of Gamecube units – thanks to Nintendo's well-priced bundle – rose by a satisfying 60 per cent Europe-wide.



△ 47 – Enjoys garotting and stealing clothes. Would prefer not to be seen.



△ Mario – Likes jumping and eating cake. Would enjoy some more attention.

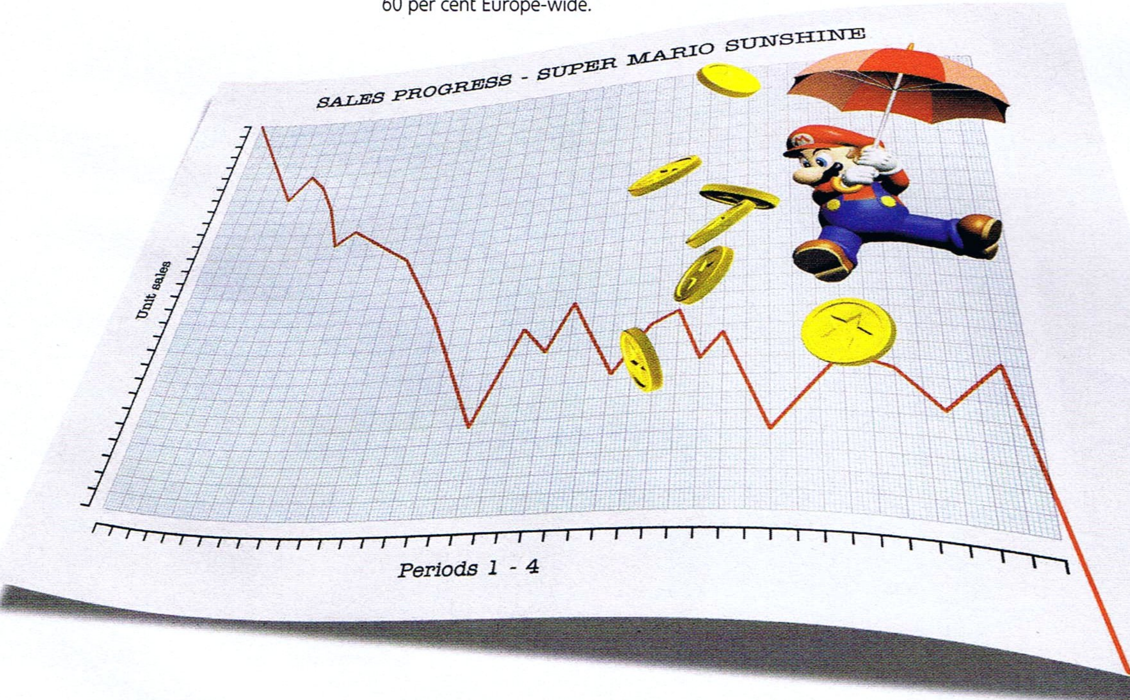
Unfortunately, this period of good fortune was short lived – and must certainly have disappointed Nintendo. Eidos' *Hitman 2*, because of the fact it was released on a machine for which there are substantially more users (as well as a simultaneous Xbox release), was able to topple *Mario* off the top spot with relative ease. The pick-up rate for the game may not have been as significant as for *Mario Sunshine*, but the sheer weight of console numbers was enough to send it to number one.

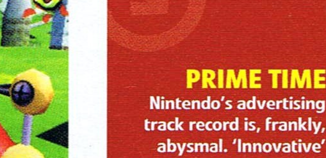
When all's said and done, though, this is still cause for concern. *Sunshine* is Nintendo's flagship title, and for it to be seen as underachieving will do Nintendo and Gamecube no favours whatsoever – especially in the eyes of the punters. The same can be said for the perceived lack of third-party releases on Gamecube. Games like *Turok* and *Timesplitters* were both released on PS2 and Xbox first, with a noticeable delay in the Gamecube versions hitting stores. It's safe to say that many of the best titles arrive last on Gamecube (ironically, the Mario-beating *Hitman* is itself the most recent example), and it's bound to have an effect on anyone looking to buy a Cube. But is this view entirely justified?

## THE THIRD PLACE

Not entirely, but many factors conspire to keep Nintendo's third-party titles further back the release list. Let's take *Timesplitters* as an example, despite development on all formats running pretty much parallel with each other, the GC version was still delayed. As a spokesperson for Eidos explained to us: "Unfortunately, Nintendo submission and manufacturing timelines tend to be longer than for Sony and Microsoft. Hence, the Gamecube version of *Timesplitters 2* was released two weeks after the PS2 and Xbox versions".

But while that's true of some games, many actually lead on Gamecube first. *Monkey Ball, Blood Rayne, Clone Wars, Die Hard: Vendetta* and *Phantasy Star Online* are prime examples, while the *Resident Evil* series remains exclusive to Gamecube – a situation that's worlds away from the third-party drought that plagued the N64. Nintendo have learned from their mistakes. Regardless, Nintendo have had a solid year, and despite some inevitable problems all is looking well. If they can push hard over the Christmas period and bolster their install base for the coming year, 2003 should turn out to be something very special indeed.



**PRIME TIME**

**Nintendo's advertising track record is, frankly, abysmal. 'Innovative' campaigns range from the unfathomably sexist *Zelda OOT* campaign (the one with the "Willst thou get the girl, or play like one?" tag-line), to the cringe-worthy *Animal Crossing* promo that had a mother of a cheesy US family turning into a (shudders) banana, and 1995's awful Ultra 64 advert, with the immortal words "You can't buy this… wait for it". Some people did. For two whole years. Everyone else bought a PlayStation. We've long held the hope that Nintendo would pull their fingers out and get with the programme. Unfortunately, it never happened. *Mario Sunshine*, Nintendo's biggest game of the year was 'complemented' by a rare and rather brief advert that did nothing to convey or reflect the majesty of the title whose launch it was supporting. Here's hoping that next year Nintendo can commission an advert with some semblance of creative flair…**

Office regarding some kind of server for hosting online games, prompting further rumours that Nintendo are readying their first MMORPG. Another theory concerning the 'big announcement' is Nintendo's imminent acquisition of a big Japanese developer. Current candidates being bandied about are Enix and Namco. We're not convinced.

**RED FACTION 2**
Playstation 2's explosive first-person shooter is set to arrive on Gamecube next year. Featuring fully destructible scenery, both instalments of THQ's shooter have been very well received.



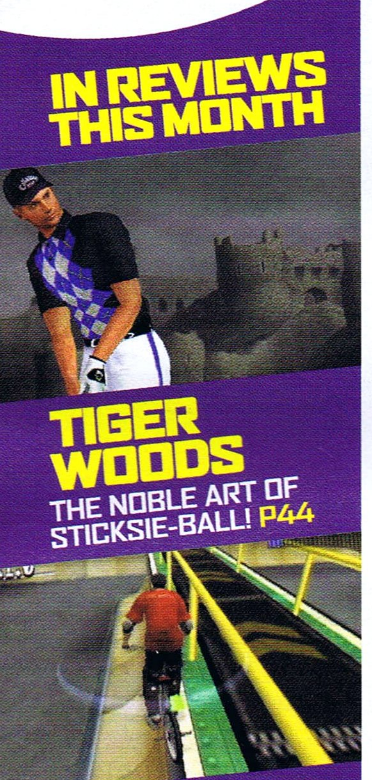
## OUR PROMISE

Our reviewers are the most talented and knowledgeable Nintendo fans in the business. We don't only play games at work – we play them at home too, just like you. We ensure that we've played games through to the end so that we can give you a proper verdict – and one that saves you from wasting money.

# NGC THE VERDICT YOU DESERVE!

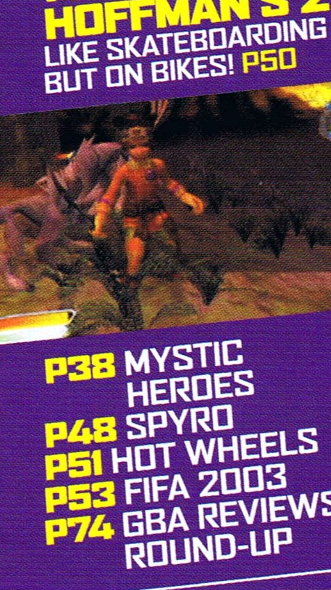
# REVIEWS

## IN REVIEWS THIS MONTH



**TIGER WOODS**
THE NOBLE ART OF STICKSIE-BALL! P44

**MAT HOFFMAN'S 2**
LIKE SKATEBOARDING – BUT ON BIKES! P50





**WHAT IS PAL?**
PAL is the UK's broadcasting standard. When you buy a Cube here it will be PAL. When you buy a Cube in the US or Japan it'll be NTSC – a different broadcasting standard, and the reason the two don't mix. Import games are NTSC games.



## MARIO PARTY 4

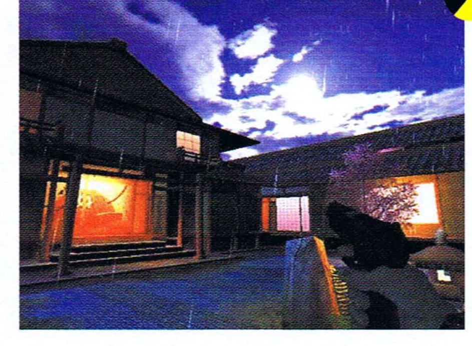
If you're the lucky owner of three friends, this is the game for you. It is, quite literally, a Mario Party! P28






## TONY HAWK'S 4

Trendier than roller skates, faster than a Bath Chair, the Hawkster returns and gets 'down' with 'it'. P64



## JAMES BOND 007 NIGHTFIRE

Just in time for Die Another Day, EA's latest makes an appearance. Get ready for Bondage! P34



## CLONE WARS

The best bit of the film transferred to the videogaming medium – take part in pitched battles in the Star Wars universe! Sadly, there's no kung-fu Yoda. But there are lightsabers. P56

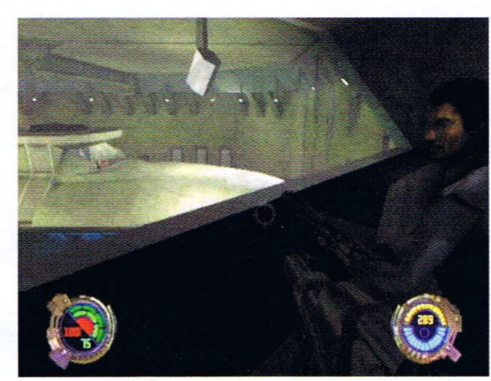
# HOW IT WORKS...

Our reviews are the biggest, most comprehensive on Planet Earth. We devote more pages to the games you want to know about, and give you more detail than anyone else. And in the new **NGC** things have just got a whole lot better: our Field of Play and Event-o-meter regulars will pinpoint exactly when and where games get good, and yet our verdicts remain the most honest and most stringent around.



## MEDAL OF HONOR FRONTLINE

Heartily-received PS2 shooter makes its way to the Gamecube. And y'know what? We've reviewed it! P70



## JEDI KNIGHT II

Ever fancied being a Jedi with a naff beard and silly name? All your dreams are about to be answered… P40



## 1 GET INTO THE GAME

The quickest and smartest way to get started…









## 2 FIELD OF PLAY

The game's best bit taken apart and analysed…





## 3 EVENT-O-METER

The good bits, the bad bits – all in a handy graph…





## 4 THE SCORE BAR

The verdict explained for you…

**PROS AND CONS**
Because we think it's important to provide you with balanced reviews, we'll sum up the game simply with plus and minus points.

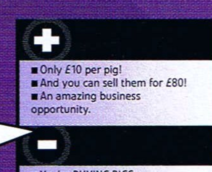
**IF YOU LIKE THIS…**
Not all games are good (unsurprisingly) – so you'll be wanting to know what the alternative is. We'll provide suggestions here.

**VISUALS AND SOUNDS**
Gamecube sends PS2 packing. Do the visuals and sounds show this?

**MASTERY**
How well does the game make use of the Cube's startling hardware?

**LIFESPAN**
Will it last you a lifetime or a couple of minutes? Here you'll find out for sure…

**VERDICT**
We don't throw scores around – we give a game what it deserves. Here you will find the definitive verdict on whether you should purchase a game.



**+**
- Only £10 per pig!
- And you can sell them for £80!
- An amazing business opportunity.

**–**
- You're BUYING PIGS.
- Pigs like to wallow in poo.
- Do you have a pig-moving licence? Didn't think so.

**IF YOU LIKE THIS...**
**Pikmin**
Nintendo
**NGC/69 85%**
Magnificent garden-based strategy. Better than buying pigs.



**7 VISUALS**
Acres of wobbling hog-flesh and graphic scenes of porcine slaughter. Disturbing.

**7 SOUNDS**
Terrifying grunts and squeals as the poor things realise they're being killed for cash.

**8 MASTERY**
Never has a small-scale business opportunity been better presented. With pigs.

**4 LIFESPAN**
There's only space for 36 pigs – and they only take six weeks to fatten up. Negligible.

**VERDICT**
*Paul's Pigs: Hogwild* is certainly a unique game, and one that only the most dedicated or foolhardy would attempt to play. Our money's on foolhardy.

**NGC 78**

## 5 OUR SCORING SYSTEM

What those scores mean to you…

NGC STAR GAME

| 0-24 | 25-49 | 50-74 | 75-89 | 90+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Crushingly awful, massively dull. Rest assured, this is crud. | Disappointing, stashed with faults and likely to be short of any quality. | Some great bits, some not-so-great bits. Decent but definitely problems. | Great fun, brilliantly programmed at times, but probably flawed. | Rarely awarded, you'll know a 90+ is absolutely essential. |

# MEET THE NGC TEAM

It's Christmas! So what do the **NGC** team want to receive in their unwashed stockings?

Face-mutating: Arch flesh-manipulator Bickham.



**JES**
"I suspect I may require plastic surgery." Why? "My jowls are threatening to envelop all of space-time."



**JUD**
A wistful, nose-embiggened Jud pondered. "I love the smell of cordite", he murmured, "but a bag of posies will do."



**KITTSY**
"Well. Plenty of fish, please, Santa," said Martin. "Like a pelican, I can store food in my giant chin-sack". Handy.



**GERAINT**
"I really couldn't ask for anything", stated Geraint. "I've got it all – especially the looks. Welsh ladies swoon, you know." Or faint.



**PAUL**
The filth-ridden sea off Weston wasn't good for surfing bore Paul. "I guess I could use something to scrub the poo off."



**DAN**
"I am a magnificent James Bond-style villain," boomed Dan, "And therefore require nothing but a secret volcano base."



**WALBANK**
"More cheese, please."





**LAURA**
Do you need some contact lenses, Laura? "I don't wear glasses." But… "LISTEN, YOU. I DON'T WEAR GLASSES. OKAY?" Er, quite.



**MAYO**
"Is there some kind of device that will enlarge my eyes and my mouth so as to be in scale with my gargantuan head?" No. "Oh. Oh dear."


△ Pair-a-sailing: beautiful water effects, infuriatingly fiddly gameplay.

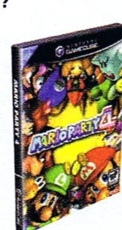

△ Stuck between a rock and a hot place in Chain Chomp Fever.


△ The life and soul of the party: earn loads of cash, buy all the stars before anyone else, and win the game.

**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER | HUDSON |
| PUBLISHER | NINTENDO |
| PLAYERS | 1-4 |
| MEMORY CARD PAGES | 2 |
| GBA LINK-UP | NO |
| SURROUND SOUND | NO |
| WIDESCREEN | NO |

**WHEN'S IT OUT?**
*Mario Party 4* is out on PAL on the same day as this publication. That's now.



**COST:** £40

# MARIO PARTY 4

**There's a party going on!** And you're all invited – as long as you bring your own joypad.

Two's company, three's a crowd…



## MINI MINIGAMES

*As well as competing in the typical four-player minigames, you also get to try your hand at games around the board itself. These are usually found in special locked-off areas, or accessed by stepping on the '?' Happening spaces.*



## JUNCTIONS

*The boards a are bit more interactive than before, with special minigames, and junctions which randomly divert your route. These do add some variety to events, but you can also find yourself going round and round in circles if the luck of the draw is against you…*



## PARTY BOARDS

*This is where most of the action takes place. There are five different boards, themed according to their hosts (gambling, haunted house, tropical island and so on). Unlike previous efforts, the boards in MP4 are in full-on high-res 3D, and much prettier.*

## EVENT SPACES

*Each board is littered with differently coloured spaces. Blue ones give you money, red ones take it away, Mushroom spaces (like the one below) give you a Mini- or Mega-Mushroom, Battle spaces start a four-player Battle Game, and so on.*



## DICE ROLLS

*This is where it all kicks off. You are greeted by your host, who doles out ten coins each and then asks you all to hit a dice block to determine who goes first. Once the order of play has been decided, the first player hits the dice again and the game begins!*



## GET INTO THE GAME

**There are plenty of options, but only one to go for…**

### PICK A CARD…

*Once the intro video has faded, you're asked to pick a card. Go for the first one on the left and get stuck straight into a Party Game. The other options take you to the Story Mode (one player); Mini-Game Mode (you won't have unlocked any yet); the Option Room (not much to fiddle with here to be honest); the Present Room (you won't have any yet); and the Extra Room, where you can play a handful of new minigames. Oh, and you'll need a memory card to store all the games that you earn.*






If your experience of the Nintendo universe starts and ends with the Gamecube, you'll be wondering – as the Americans so humorously did with the movie Henry V – just what happened to the other parts. For all those gaming pub bores out there, *Mario Party* started life on the N64, waaaayyy back in 1998, and sired two more offerings, *Mario Party 2* and – you've guessed it – *Mario Party 3*. With the death of the N64, it seemed only natural for Hudson to continue the franchise with Gamecube – which it has.

The basic premise is this: *Mario Party 4* is a virtual board game, the aim of which is to have the most stars at the end of the game. Each player selects a character. Characters then hit a dice block to move around the board. Depending where you land, stuff happens. After each character has had a turn, one of 40 minigames randomly appears, in which you compete against everyone else to win coins. Eventually, someone reaches the star and buys it – then a new star

> **"MARIO PARTY IS A VIRTUAL BOARD GAME, THE AIM OF WHICH IS TO HAVE THE MOST STARS AT THE END"**



**PARTY HARD!** The largest birthday shindig was in honour of the 89th birthday of Kentucky Fried Chicken founder, "Colonel" Sanders, on 8th September 1979. 35,000 people turned up, to gorge themselves on spicy chicken limbs.

"It's more a special edition director's cut of *Mario Party 2*"




## SHOP 'TILL YOU DROP

*A big part of all the Mario Party games is the shop. There are usually two per board, and it's the place where you can buy various items to use on yourself, or on the other players. As well as the Mini- and Mega-Mushrooms (just like the Keys and Mushrooms of old), there's the MiniMega Hammer (make other players big or small); Warp Pipe (switch places randomly); Super Mega-Mushroom (use three dice); Boo's Crystal Ball (like a Boo Bell: call Boo to steal coins or stars); Gaddlight (keeps Boo away); Chomp Call (gets the star moved to a new location); Bowser Suit (dress up like Bowser and stomp on people); Sparky Sticker (place on the board to electrify opponents); and, best of all, the Genie Lamp, which transports you directly to the star.*



## MINIGAME STYLES

Mario Party 4 *features a variety of gaming action…*

### FOUR-PLAYER



*The original and best type of minigame: this is your pure one-on-one-on-one-on-one action. It's every man (or woman or monkey) for himself (herself, itself). There's only one winner and the cash prize (ten gold coins) goes to the victor. (Unless it's a coin-collecting game, in which case everyone wins.)*

### ONE VS THREE



*Depending which colour spaces you land on, you might end up in a one-on-three competition, where it's one character pitted against the cumulative actions of the other three. And if even one of the group is left standing at the end, the trio all take home ten gold coins each. So it's tough on the lone gamer.*

### TWO VS TWO



*This one's fairly split between the four players, two-on-two. You'll be paired with the player who landed on the same colour space, and it's a team effort to beat your opponents. The winning duo takes home the booty, the losing pair gets zip. This game type causes the most fall-outs and disagreements of all!*

### BATTLE GAME



*This is your typical four-player game, but the cash prizes can be much higher. The party host decides on the kitty (5, 10, 30, 50 coins… whatever) and everyone's cash is pooled. The winner takes the lion's share, the second player usually gets their stake back, and the other two go home sulking.*



appears. More stuff happens. And so it continues until the preset turn limit expires. Winner rejoices; losers throw food/tantrum/wobblies to suit.

The game offers up five different boards, themed by its owner. So Boo's Haunted Bash features a ghost train, Shy Guy's Jungle Jam has a river raft ride, and so on. As you progress round the board, you'll come across standard spaces, such as the Item Shop, where you can buy items; Bowser spaces whereupon Bowser – or one of his baby minions – does something devilish; the Lottery Shop, where you can play a game of chance; or the Reversal of Fortune pinball game (which *Mario Party* veterans will recognise as Chance Time), where players can be forced to part with coins or stars on the random drop of of the pinball.

With each progressive Party Game, Hudson's developers have tried adding a new element, and for *MP4* the major addition is that characters can use Mega- or Mini-Mushrooms. Mega Mushrooms act like a Golden Mushroom-cum-Bowser Suit of previous parties, in that it lets you take two dice rolls, stomp on anybody in your way and steal ten coins. Mini-Mushrooms, on the other hand, act like keys, shrinking you down and providing access to locked-off areas of the board and to Mini-Minigames.



### SPACE RACE

***Just like a normal board game, each party board is split into coloured spaces, the majority of which are blue or red. The blue ones earn you three coins; the red ones take three away. Towards the end of the game, a wheel is spun, which either leaves things as they are, doubles the value of the red/blue spaces, or turns all the red ones into Bowser spaces – which is seriously bad news for all concerned…***

### PARTY POOPER

And this where the first problem arrives, in that although *MP4* looks significantly different, it plays all-too-similarly to previous outings. The structure's the same, a lot of the Happening events on the board we've seen before (random chance junctions, shortcuts, Battle Games and so on), Boo still lets you steal coins or stars, and even some of the minigames are similar to before… it's not so much *Mario Party 4*, more like a Special Edition Director's Cut of *MP2*.

The biggest change is just how much better it looks than before. The minigames generally look sumptuous (though we'd kind of taken that as granted – this IS the Gamecube after all). The boards are now fully rendered in 3D, which provides the opportunity to have some character-eye views of proceedings. Although this only ever happens when taking a shortcut on the back of a dolphin, train or theme park amusement ride, and since



△ Mushroom Medic cleverly relies on spotting the odd-one-out heartbeat via joypad rumbles.

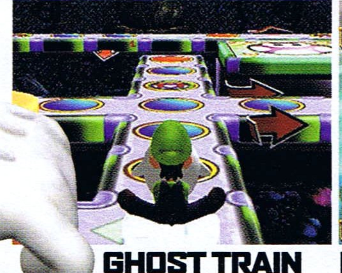



△ The Bowser space: bad news for everyone.

△ The Extra section – hosted by Thwomp and Whomp – lets you indulge in some neat minigames right away.

## BOARD STUPID

The new boards are a lot more interactive – but it's not all for the better…



### GHOST TRAIN

*On Boo's Haunted Bash, ghosts pop up and change the path you take. The Mystery Train always carries you to the bone yard, but at least you can change the route that you take along the way.*



### DOLPHIN RIDE

*On Koopa's Seaside Soiree, dolphins carry you from one side of the board to the other – whether you want them to or not. It's all very nicely rendered in 3D, but it would be better if you had the option of skipping it.*



### MINI MINIGAMES

*Some of the boards feature mini-minigames, such as this merry-go-round, where you play to win special items. You can only play on these once you've taken a Mini-Mushroom and become 'vertically challenged'.*



### &%!*$ MONKEYS!

*The worst bit of all has to be the banana skin junctions on Koopa's Soiree. When the monkey throws a 'nana, your character jumps on it and either falls up the board or down. It's slow, random and utterly infuriating.*

you rarely control these events, they're little more than eye candy.

The most serious flaw with *MP4* is that the game boards are pretty unimaginative. Having made the leap to 3D, all Hudson have done is add a few loop-the-loops and some pretty animated backdrops. It would have been really cool to have boards that cross over, or that had hidden sections underneath that you could fall down onto. But it's not just that they're simplistic; they're also frustrating. Progress can be painfully slow, and you have almost no control over junctions, so it's often a matter of luck whether you end up going in the direction you'd like, or being sent back round where you've been before.

> **"IT'S OFTEN A MATTER OF LUCK AS TO WHETHER YOU END UP GOING IN THE DIRECTION YOU WANT TO GO IN"**

The worst culprit in this respect is on Koopa's Seaside Soiree, where monkeys guard two major junctions. Your character is forced to jump on a banana skin (with the usual comedic outcome), and you're sent in one of two directions: one is good; the other bad. And if lady luck has run out on you, it's easy to find yourself going round and round and not actually achieving anything at all.

### STORY TIME

Perhaps as some small admission that the Party mode ain't all that, Hudson have gone to some effort to offer up alternative

**EXTREMIST PARTY** At University, Dan once hosted a party so big there were queues to get in, and about 350 people were telling him how his house was "the best club night in town". The last person left at 11pm the next day.

# NINE OF THE BEST

Here's our pick of the *Mario Party 4* crop – the ones we look forward to and which, inevitably, never appear during the Party Game. We've also included our recommended responses to victory…




**GOOOOOOOAL!** It's a three-against-one penalty shoot-out. Keeping the tally below ten goals is accompanied by raising both arms in the air and nodding to an appreciative, though non-existent, crowd.




**THREE THROW** A high score depends on hitting the middle baskets (throwing the ball at half-jump height). Some Chris Tucker-style head-wobbling and finger-snapping seems to fit the victory bill.




**BLIZZARD'S BRIGADE** Run about like a mad thing to survive the volley of snowballs. This deserves a cool winning response – a James Bond-esque "Sorry you all had such a frosty reception", perhaps.



**BOOKSQUIRM** Watching your opponents squashed beneath the pages of this giant book has a joy all of its own. A gentle knowing nod and a wry smile should be sufficient to raise their hackles.



**BOWSER'S BIGGER BLAST** The old favourite, bigger and shinier than before. Random survival should be levelled at your mastery of the Force, accompanied by pearls of Obi-Wan-style wisdom.




**STAMP OUT** It's the fastest one to make the biggest inky mess – most specifically, over everyone else's trail. We suggest some David Brent-style dancing and pointing to really ram it home.



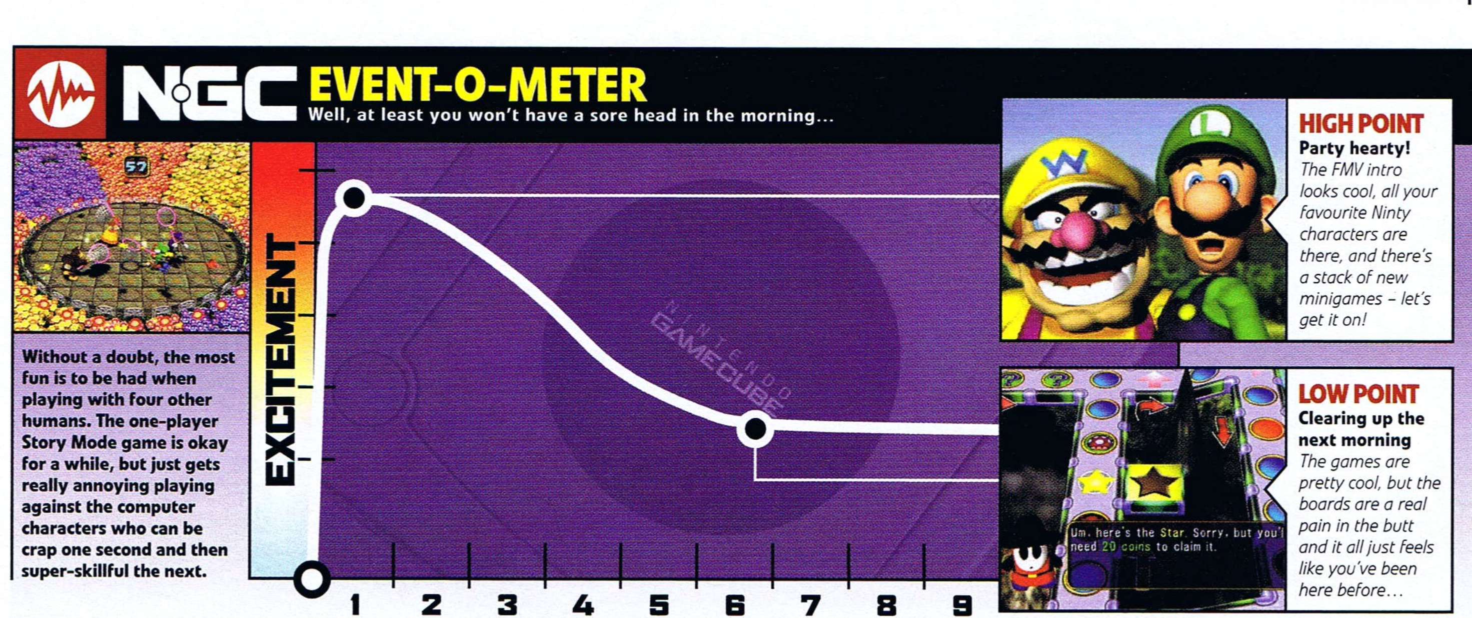

**REVERSE-A-BOMB** This tense two-on-two game needs fast reactions to prevent getting Bob-ombed. Assuming your partner is at arms' length, a high-five and "boom" sound should suffice.



**TRACE RACE** Remember Crazy Cutters? Anyone with a deft touch on the stick should enjoy winning this one. Losers should be goaded with clumsy joypad-dropping and 'nurgh-nurgh' noises.

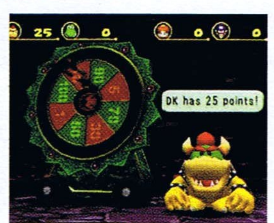



**MARIO SPEEDWAGONS** You'll need to be quick off the mark and swift on the gears for this drag race. Once past the line, pretend you can't see anyone else – look around, going "hello? Hello?".





△ Watch those Bob-ombs, Peach! This isn't really the place to go sightseeing when it's rush-hour in Bob-ombsville.

△ Land on Bowser and you'll be playing to keep your cash.

△ It's not as painful as *MP1*, but there are plenty of potential joypad-breaking moments.

△ Enormous spinning cake. Of doom, probably.

entertainment. Story mode is a one-player version of the main Party Game, where you compete against computer-controlled adversaries. The turn-limit is smaller than usual, and you not only unlock some special minigames, but you also receive presents once each board has been completed.

As you'd expect, Mini-Game Mode lets you play all of the minigames you've unlocked, and allows you to indulge in some instant gaming action. You can opt for Free Play (play any game you like), Team Play (split into pairs), Battle mode (first one to a set number of victories), or Tic-Tac-Toe mode (play on a noughts and crosses grid – win a game to leave your counter).

And then there's the Extra Room, run by Thwomp and Whomp, which plays host to some special, one-off minigames. Clearly, Hudson has made a brave attempt to inject some longevity into its latest bumper party pack, but to be honest, this effort would have been better spent on juicing up the main Party Game. In the past, we've had an awful lot of fun with the *Mario Party* series (*MP2*, especially) and so hopes were high for this high-res, updated, next-gen version.

Let's face it: Hudson have had four attempts to refine the franchise, so by now you'd think they'd have nailed it. And while this is a pretty decent version, with some clever touches and entertaining minigames, there's still room for the defining *Mario Party*. One where the board lets you form proper strategies to mess up the other players. One where pure chance is replaced by tactical skill. And one where there's more than just a measly 40 minigames to play in Party mode. While *Mario Party 4* undoubtedly has a lot to offer, but it's not the leap forward we'd have liked.

**STEVE JARRATT**

**"HUDSON HAS HAD FOUR ATTEMPTS TO REFINE THE FRANCHISE. BY NOW YOU'D THINK THEY'D HAVE NAILED IT"**

### EXTRA PLAY
*To add a little fizz to the proceedings, there are a range of options if you just fancy a go at the minigames. You can play as tag teams, engage in Battle games, or even play a version of noughts and crosses, where victory in a minigame secures your position on the grid. There are also some Extra minigames to be had with Thwomp and Whomp.*


- New minigames are always welcome.
- Much better looking.
- Lots of options.


- Boards are more complex but less fun.
- Some good items have gone missing.


**IF YOU LIKE THIS…**
**Mario Party 2**
Hudson
NGC/42 87%
The second and best party game. Look out for it second-hand.



**6 VISUALS**
So much nicer than on the N64 – the water effects especially.

**5 SOUNDS**
The usual array of jolly tunes, silly voices and Nintendo sound FX.

**5 MASTERY**
Nothing here that couldn't be done on any other console.

**7 LIFESPAN**
There's still plenty of game to be had here, if you play with friends.

## VERDICT
**Perhaps we expected too much but, sadly, this is just *Mario Party* by-the-numbers. Try renting it for special family occasions.**







"You'll often be dazzled by what appears to be on offer"



**BAD GUYS**
*The usual goons are in place to make your life a misery. In general they're competent foes, but the AI is a little wonky and they sometimes won't realise their mate's been shot in the head and is now utterly, irrevocably dead. Hmm.*

**GUNS, GUNS, GUNS!**
*Just like* Agent Under Fire, Nightfire*'s guns are an underwhelming bunch – apart from the excellent first-person rockets, nicked from* Perfect Dark*'s Slayer.*

**ENVIRONMENT**
*You're taken all over the world, from a snowy Austrian castle to a hidden South Pacific island, to office blocks to sneak around in at night – there's plenty to see and do, that's for sure.*

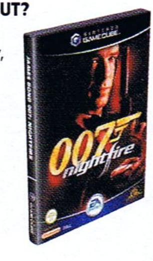
The secret to good spying is tight trousers.

**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER | EUROCOM |
| PUBLISHER | EA |
| PLAYERS | 1-4 |
| MEMORY CARD PAGES | 2 |
| GBA LINK-UP | NO |
| WIDESCREEN | NO |
| SURROUND SOUND | YES |

**WHEN'S IT OUT?**
*Nightfire* will be out to buy, in shops of retail, right frickin' now. Should you choose to.

**COST: £40**





# JAMES BOND 007 NIGHTFIRE

**Bond's back, shiny and new!** But try as we might, we can't help mentioning *GoldenEye*…

*Nightfire* is magnificently, absurdly Bondian. *Agent Under Fire*, for all its gadget-laden trickery, looks pedestrian by comparison. This is silly, over-the-top stuff, played with the straightest of faces. Take the opening level – a helicopter-based Bond snipes enemy cars as they chase a beautiful female spy through Paris. Finish the level and you're treated to a gorgeous Bond credits sequence, just like in the movies (complete with rubbish song, nubile women and striking imagery). You then start the game proper, the introductory level serving as the traditional pre-credits action sequence. It parrots the formula marvellously closely, and makes for a true feeling of an event.

But here's what you want to know, really: this isn't a patch on *GoldenEye*. And that's not just the nostalgia talking – go back and plug the cart in. You'll see.

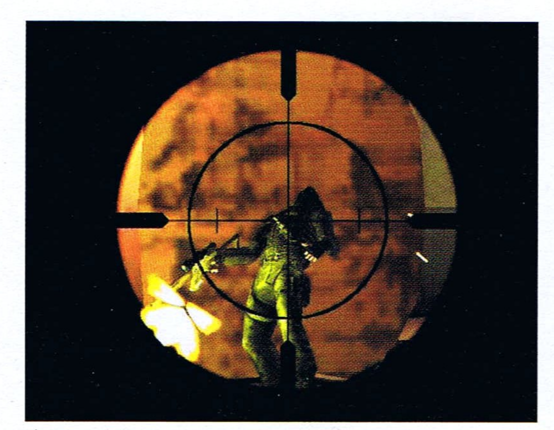
The problem is that *Nightfire* is workmanlike where it should be enthralling, despite the scintillating presentation and Brosnan-likeness. You'll often be dazzled by what appears to be on offer – the opening level proper *looks* thrilling, asking you to infiltrate a snowbound castle and worm your way into a high-class party inside – but the action's often less enticing than it first seems. Reach the right area to eavesdrop a secret meeting, for example, and you're shown a cut-scene, rather than actually doing the spying/taking photos/recording conversations yourself. Later on, there's a moment during a snowmobile chase when a gunship hoves into view – Bond accelerates and jumps through the crew compartment of the chopper. How good would it have

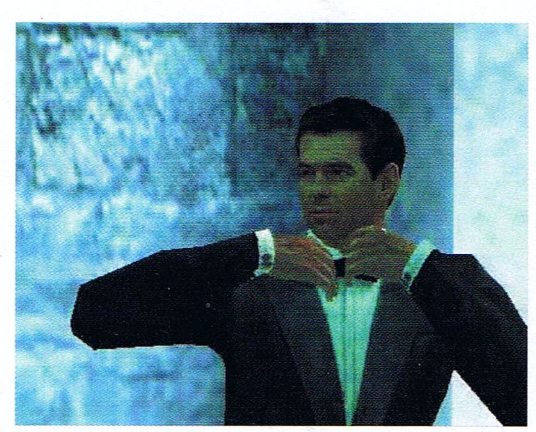


**GADGETRY**
*As you'd expect, Nightfire offers a wealth of Bond-related gadgetry, much of which you'll recall from Agent Under Fire (such as the Q-Jet and Q-Claw). Our favourite is the Q-Worm, a disc-based computer virus that disrupts vital systems (possibly just because the name is mildly amusing). The trusty Q-Specs are fun, too, meaning you can see through walls and in infra-red. Very nice.*

# JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE

A licence to thrill, or a licence to print money?


Thankfully, the ping-pong ball bullets have gone.

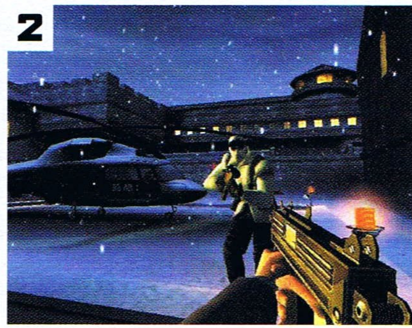

The Brosnan face makes a difference. Very James Bond.

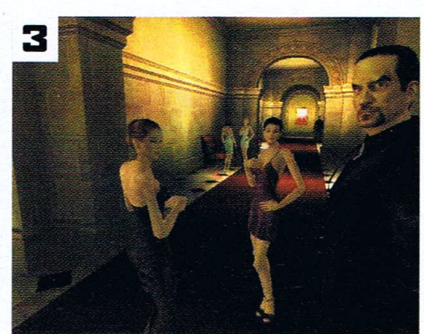

You'll find yourself sneaking around an office block.

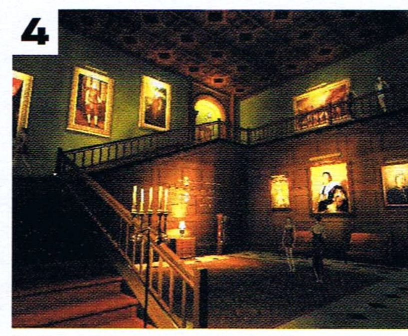

## OPENING CREDITS...

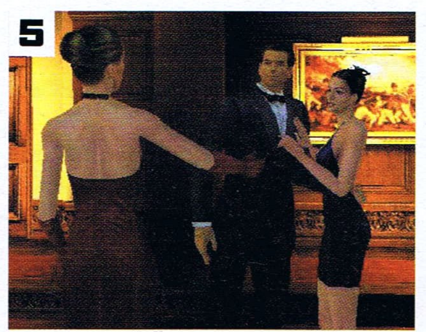
We take you through *Nightfire*'s first proper level – infiltrating an icy castle and crashing a party...


1 Eliminate guards silently on the road to the castle...

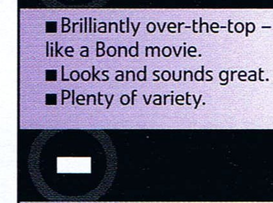

2 Make your way past the walls into the compound.


3 Gatecrash the party and mind the lovely ladies. He-llo!


4 You'll need to spy on a meeting and then escape too.


5 Bond's love interests (plural) are formally introduced.


6 Escape in a cable car and shoot down a gunship.


- Brilliantly over-the-top – like a Bond movie.
- Looks and sounds great.
- Plenty of variety.

–

- Tedious on-rails bits.
- Workmanlike levels.
- Clunky AI.
- Boring guns.


**IF YOU LIKE THIS...**
**Agent Under Fire**
EA
**NGC/70, 70%**
Often pedestrian prequel to *Nightfire* – patchy to play.



**8 VISUALS**
Beautifully presented, despite some bland textures and detail.

**7 SOUNDS**
Tons of speech and *that* theme tune – plus a proper song. Crazy!

**8 MASTERY**
Big, smooth and good-looking – certainly pushes the hardware.

**7 LIFESPAN**
The sometimes-tedious single-player offsets the wealth of activities.

**VERDICT**
**Very 'Bond' indeed, and hugely polished, but *Nightfire* fails to offer a truly captivating shoot-'n'-sneak experience.**







been if you had to do it yourself? But again, you're just shown it instead.

This hand-holding, excitement-draining policy presents itself everywhere in the game – the driving sections, making a return from *Agent Under Fire*, are stuffed full of prompts, telling you exactly when to use a gadget or – unbelievably – fire a gun. As a result, the freedom to tackle a mission on your own terms, to be given the tools of the trade and make up your own mind on how to complete your mission – arguably what made *GoldenEye* so sublime – is missing.

### A CUT TOO MUCH

Given that *Nightfire* is also tied closely to an in-game narrative, one that's constantly punctuated with cut-scenes and plot developments, you're never given the time to completely immerse yourself in the game (and you often feel like you're simply making your way to the next checkpoint to see another cut-scene). As far as surface presentation goes, *Nightfire* is exemplary, but it lacks the depth and drama a more freeform design would have offered.

Perhaps we're being too harsh. But despite the obvious bells and whistles – and occasional flashes of real excitement that creeping around a new area, or racing through city streets, or firefighting in a Tokyo manor engender – this is really just a spit and polish of *Agent Under Fire*. Sure, it's been improved considerably and is a demonstrably better game, there's a grander sense of occasion, and true-to-form innuendo is slathered liberally all over the place, but underneath all the gloss it's not *really* that different from Bond's first Gamecube title. And when the latest eye-dazzling videogame iteration of Britain's favourite secret agent can't deliver content able to best a five-year-old N64 game, then you can only be disappointed. Good, then, but certainly not great.

JES BICKHAM

> **"DESPITE THE OBVIOUS BELLS AND WHISTLES, THIS IS A SPIT-AND-POLISH JOB ON AGENT UNDER FIRE"**

**MULTI BOND**

***One of the best bits of Agent Under Fire – the multiplayer – has been retooled and polished for Nightfire. While the weapons, as in single-player, are an anodyne bunch (aside from the first-person missiles), the sprawling, good-looking levels are a treat. But you have to unlock them in the single-player game, and there's only one available to begin with.***

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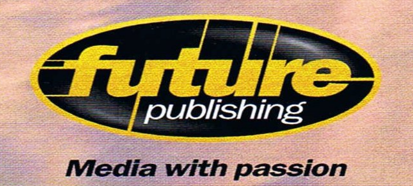
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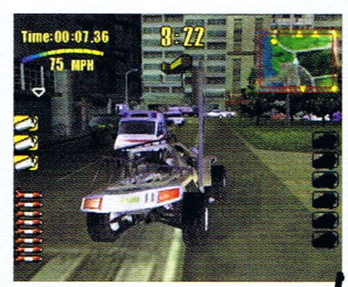


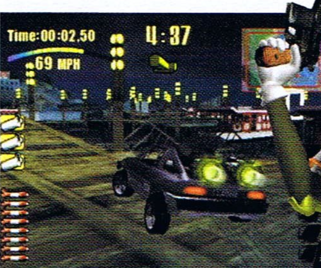

www.computercover.biz





△ You try to protect a bus full of honest folk, and this is all the thanks you get. Typical.

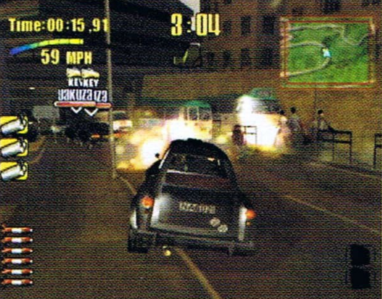

△ There's squillions of secret cars.


△ It's just like Back to the Future. Um.




△ The city is teeming.


△ Look! A London cab. In Japan. Crazy.


△ You'll have to bash the Yakuza to bits.

# WRECKLESS THE YAKUZA MISSIONS

## If it's good enough for Xbox, it's good enough for a rushed port over to Gamecube. Nice.

**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER | BROADSWORD |
| PUBLISHER | ACTIVISION |
| PLAYERS | 1-2 |
| MEMORY CARD PAGES | 19 |
| GBA LINK-UP | NO |
| SURROUND SOUND | NO |
| WIDESCREEN | NO |

**WHEN'S IT OUT?**
If reheated old Xbox games are your thing, *Wreckless* is in the shops now, for purchase, for monies.



**COST: £40**

As an example of how little worth the word 'exclusive' holds nowadays, *Wreckless* is peerless. As a game, it fares less well.

Originally emblazoned with an 'Only On Xbox' sticker when it launched with Microsoft's machine, the game has now made the leap to both Gamecube and PlayStation 2. That's positive news in some ways – more games is always a good thing – but unfortunately *Wreckless* is simply dull and tedious, a weak attempt to emulate the kind of free-roaming experience provided by the PS2's *Grand Theft Auto 3*.

Giving you a whole city to drive around, *Wreckless* allows you to play as either Japanese cops or bumbling American spies. It's not quite two games in one, though, as playing as one set of characters simply gives you a tweaked set of the other protagonists missions, approaching them from a slightly different angle.

Generally, the game boils down to haring around ramming enemy cars, either offensively or in the course of defending something – a school bus, say. It's good for a half-hour, but the appeal soon wears, especially given that the heavy, skid-happy handling doesn't allow for anything resembling decisive and accurate driving. Couple this with narrow streets that almost always see you ramming a wall rather than pulling off a perfect handbrake turn, and *Wreckless* is more often than not an exercise in frustration and pinballing off buildings.

The game doesn't look half as good as the Xbox version either, and shockingly, the damage model – which saw your vehicle fall to bits the more you battered it – is entirely absent. Helpful, given the amount of crashes you'll be having, but the knowledge that it's a decidedly inferior port of an already poor game doesn't do *Wreckless* any favours.

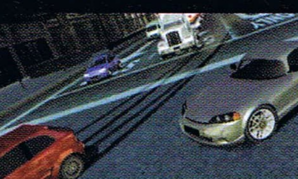
The various bells and whistles can't really save the game, either. There are tons of cars to unlock, and sub-missions, myriad shortcuts and room to explore, plus plenty of lifespan-extending two-player options, but none of it detracts from the fact that this is head-noddingly mediocre. If we must have ports of old Xbox games, can we at least get something decent? Just a thought.

**JES BICKHAM**

**+**
- Big city to explore.
- Lots of destruction.
- two player co-operative modes.

**–**
- Tedious and dull.
- Handles like a hippo.
- Much worse than the Xbox version.

**IF YOU LIKE THIS...**
**Burnout**
Acclaim
NGC/67 86%
Loads of crashing – but a really good game as well.



**6 VISUALS**
Shiny cars and crowded streets – but dumbed down from the Xbox.

**5 SOUNDS**
Endless, irritating, repetitive crashing noises. And 'music'.

**6 MASTERY**
There's lots of things moving around, but it's by-the-numbers stuff.

**5 LIFESPAN**
The plethora of two-player missions keep the game from dying.

**VERDICT**
**A below-par rehash of an old Xbox game, *Wreckless* is full of sound and fury, and ultimately empty and uninvolving.**






"It's relentless-hordes-of-identical-enemies time again"




△ You can even charge your weapon with magic powers to make it more effective in battle.




△ Battling monsters increases your magic.




△ Characters are adept in different skills.




△ The four player-mode isn't the best in the world, but it's a good addition.

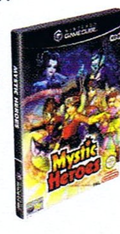



△ Magic attacks are best used when you're surrounded by enemies.

## INFO BURST

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER | KOEI |
| PUBLISHER | THQ |
| PLAYERS | 1-4 |
| MEMORY CARD PAGES | 6 |
| GBA LINK-UP | NO |
| SURROUND SOUND | NO |
| WIDESCREEN | NO |

**WHEN'S IT OUT?**
By the time your read this, you should be able to find it in your local store. Games store, that is.




**COST: £40**

# MYSTIC HEROES

## **A solitary nutter with a magic rock,** and an army of thousands squaring up against just lil' old you!

It's quite rare for titles to undergo any major changes when they're translated and converted between different territories. *Mystic Heroes* is one of those rarities. It may have lost its GBA link-up feature (that was designed for use with the Japanese GBA game), but it has gained a multiplayer mode – the very thing we craved after awarding *Battle Houshin*, as it was known as back in issue 69, a respectably healthy 70 per cent.

As far as the basic main game is concerned, everything is very much the same as it was first time around. You choose from one of four different characters before setting out on a *Gauntlet*-style slash-a-thon.

Yup. It's relentless-hordes-of-identical-enemies time again. Armed only with a basic melee weapon and your character's specific magical abilities, you have to hack your way through wave after wave of samurai types before facing off with the end-of-level boss.

The battle system is very simple. Tapping the A-button sets off your standard combo of kicks, flips and slashes. As you make hits your magic bar increases. Use it when the meter's full, and you'll dish out a massive blast of your magic. Use it when it's not so full and your weapon will be charged with magic energy, allowing you to wade into the fray with more damaging attacks It all works rather well. Okay, so *Mystic Heroes* might be something of a no-brainer, but at least it's an entertaining – if a little repetitive and short-lived – no-brainer.

> "HACK YOUR WAY THROUGH WAVE AFTER WAVE OF SAMURAI TYPES BEFORE FACING OFF WITH THE BOSS"

It's not exactly going to win any awards, but it's definitely worth a look. The all new multiplayer, while not particularly amazing or innovative, is a damn good laugh, and the new modes on offer and multiple character routes through the game all combine to create a nicely kooky Japanese title that really shows up the Gamecube's *Gauntlet* as the rancid turd that it is.

GERAINT EVANS



- Instantly accessible.
- They've added a multiplayer mode!
- Intense battles.



- Repetitive fighting.
- It's a little bit on the shallow side.
- Very short.



**IF YOU LIKE THIS...**
**Gauntlet: Dark Legacy**
Nintendo
NGC/68 25%
Similar – except this one is a real stinker.





**6 VISUALS**
Cute characters, flashy magic effects. Generally sweet all-rounder.


**6 SOUNDS**
The usual grunts, slashes and cheers, and some forgettable music.


**6 MASTERY**
We've not seen this much fog since *Turok*. Lots of enemies though.


**7 LIFESPAN**
Short single-player, but the four-player is worth some extended play.

## VERDICT

**Frantic battling against huge armies. It's shallow, relentless and a little on the mental side – but fun all the same.**







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"*Jedi Knight II* can be mind-bendingly dull"

**ENVIRONMENTS**

*So big you'll soon get hopelessly lost. Note the many pleasing shades of grey – you'll be seeing a whole lot more of those as you wander aimlessly around vast compounds for hours on end.*

**CROSSHAIR**

*Very handy, this, whatever Obi-Wan Kenobi says. Especially later on, where anything that can be manipulated using the Force makes it turn blue.*

**WEAPON**

*Not great, unfortunately. There aren't many to choose from, either, and few of the weapons are particularly inspired. Thankfully, getting to use Force powers and lightsabers more than makes up for them.*

**AMMO**

*How much you have left. Different weapons use different types of ammo that can be collected from stiffed enemies. There are also ammo pods that let you charge up your standard rifle.*

**SHIELDS AND HEALTH**

*Run out of these and you're a goner. You can heal yourself using the Force, or by picking up Bacta Tanks that you can store in your inventory.*

# JEDI KNIGHT II

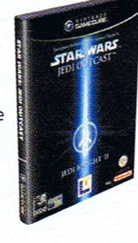
## **The most unconvincing Jedi** who never lived brings his stupid beard and PC blasting to Gamecube…

**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER | RAVEN |
| PUBLISHER | ACTIVISION |
| PLAYERS | 1-4 |
| MEMORY CARD PAGES | 27 |
| GBA LINK-UP | NO |
| SURROUND SOUND | NO |
| WIDESCREEN | NO |

**WHEN'S IT OUT?**

*Jedi Knight II* will be out in both PAL and NTSC versions by the time you read these very words.




**COST: £40**

Half an hour into this game and the biggest stand-out moment had been creeping up behind Jan Ors and cattle prodding her in the rear before watching useless Jedi Kyle Katarn bow his head in shame. Hilarious, but not a good start by any stretch of the imagination.

Initial impressions of *Star Wars Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast* (to give it its typically long-winded title) are poor. The environments are weak. Corridors and corridors of identikit textures are just no fun. Sudden movements distort flat surfaces. There are inconsistencies in the behaviour of objects around you – some grates can be blown open while others can't, for example – and the whole package reeks of mediocrity. More so when you consider the brilliance of *Dark Forces* and *Jedi Knight*, both games that are years old.

The main problem with *Jedi Outcast* is that it's so mind-bendingly dull in places. Not only that, but it's huge, too. It wouldn't be a bad thing, but combined with the maddening tedium of the tasks you need to perform to progress it's enough to suck the life out of you. Over and over again, you're forced to trudge across a level, flip a switch, trudge all the way back to go through a door to flip another switch to open a door that… well, you get the picture. Raven don't seem to realise that collecting keys and running errands isn't a whole lot of fun. Remember *Universal Studios*, anyone? Exactly.



**PLATFORM BLUES**

***There's nothing worse than fiddly jumping tasks in an FPS – unfortunately, Outcast has them in abundance. The only saving grace is that you can save anywhere at any time, letting you retry those frustrating sections without having to backtrack through the level. Great.***



# JEDI KNIGHT II

Tedious blasting action in yet another Star Wars cash cow



△ YAWN! It's another Stormtrooper. There really is a limit to how many of these you can shoot.



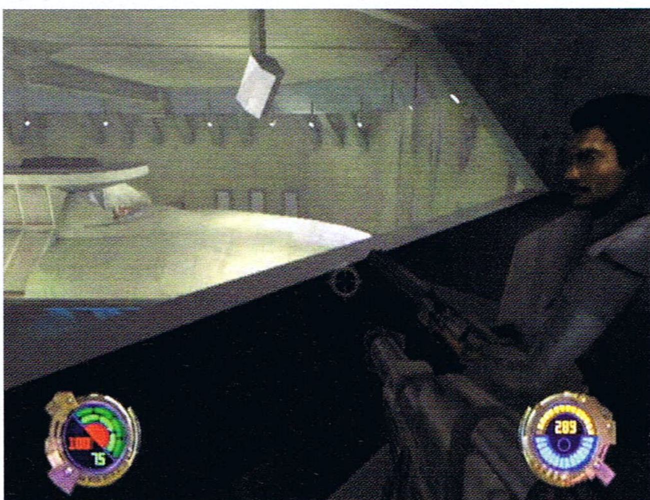




△ The weapons on offer are pretty bland – thank heavens for the force skills then.



△ Once you get the saber the game becomes far more engrossing and enjoyable.



△ Lando considers using a blaster rifle to burn off Katarn's stupid facial hair.

**+**

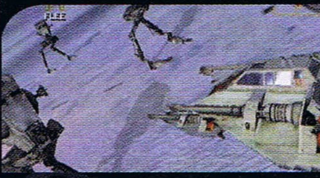
- The levels are HUGE.
- It's pretty tough – even from the start.
- Use the Force!

**–**

- Appalling visuals.
- Levels lack focus.
- Rubbish weapons.
- Boring puzzles.

**IF YOU LIKE THIS...**

**Rogue Leader**
**Activision**
**NGC/68 87%**
**By far the best Star Wars game we've seen in years.**



**5 VISUALS**
Dull textures, irritating jaggies and distortion during movement.

**7 SOUNDS**
The music makes up for an otherwise total lack of atmosphere.

**5 MASTERY**
The levels are big, but the Gamecube is capable of much better.

**8 LIFESPAN**
Huge and challenging – if you have the patience to sit through it all.

**VERDICT**
**Strictly for devoted Star Wars fans only, this one – but even if you are, you might still come away disappointed.**







## FORCES TO BE RECKONED WITH

As you progress, you'll learn some most impressive Force skills…



**SABER THROW**
*As you'd expect, this allows you to throw your saber to take out faraway enemies. At higher levels it can home in on the enemy.*



**FORCE SPEED**
*One of the best skills. It slows down time so you can take your aim without being rushed. Most effective against other Jedi.*



**MIND TRICKS**
*Brilliant, this one. At its higher levels you can use it to not only distract enemies Obi-Wan style, but even turn them into your allies.*



**FORCE GRIP**
*One of the most entertaining skills. You can pick troopers up, bang them against walls, and even throw them off cliffs. Priceless.*



**FORCE PULL**
*Can be used for flipping faraway switches or grabbing items you can't otherwise get to. Also good for yanking weapons from enemies.*

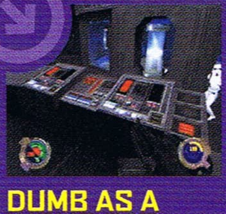
### GAME OF TWO HALVES

Thankfully, things do get better – not much, mind, but the game does improve the more you slog through it. Despite having the word Jedi in the title (twice), you don't actually get your hands on the saber until about halfway through *Jedi Knight II*. Once you do, though, the game takes on an exciting new aspect – saber duelling is the high point of the game, and there are some pleasingly challenging opponents to battle against. The switch from first- to third-person perspective is well implemented, and battling troopers while deflecting their attacks is satisfying. Furthermore, the Force skills you learn help to add an extra dimension – giving you more attacking options to play with, and helping to bolster the game's otherwise disappointing array of weaponry.

> **"DESPITE HAVING THE WORD JEDI IN THE TITLE (TWICE) YOU DON'T GET YOUR HANDS ON A SABER FOR AGES"**

Unfortunately, this is all *Jedi Knight* has going for it. While the levels just about manage to keep your attention, there's no denying that the game is riddled with issues that need never have surfaced. The presentation, for example – where Star Wars games normally excel – is a disgrace. It looks and sounds right, but the game world is so poorly conceived that none of it adds up to any kind of atmosphere. The pirate-like grunts and screams of the hundreds of identical troopers you kill become repetitive and farcical. The cut-scenes are grainy and do little to rouse any kind of emotion other than disgust. The controls, especially the strafing, are sluggish and unwieldy, and the complete lack of imagination – save for two or three quirky set-pieces – means that the whole experience feels more like a test of your patience rather than an enjoyable jaunt in the Star Wars universe.

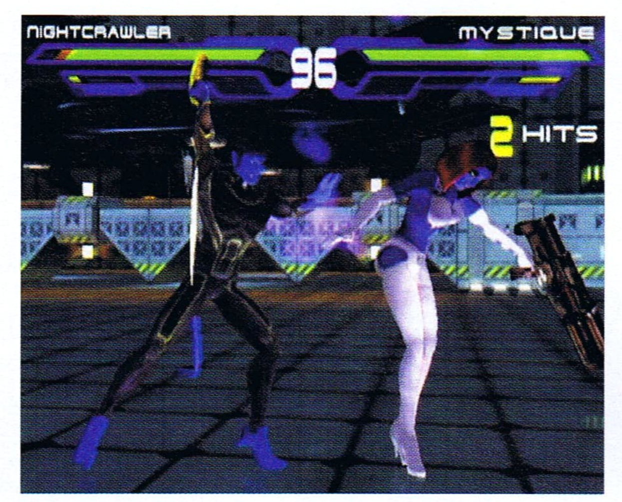
GERAINT EVANS



**DUMB AS A WOMP RAT**

***Jedi Knight II's AI is laughably inconsistent. You can gun down an entire platoon in front of an Imperial officer and he won't even notice, conversely, you can take out one lone trooper miles from anywhere and before you know it an entire garrison will descend on you to administer justice.***

"This game reeks of mediocrity"




△ Mystique could have picked a better time to ask if her bum looks big.




△ Wolverine and Gambit square off, but there's a fair chance you'll fall asleep before the last round.

△ One of those super-moves in action.



△ Juggernaut really is stupidly large.



△ This huge Sentinel fella is rock-hard.



# X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION

## **The X-Men and the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants**, joining forces against a common foe?

### INFO BURST

| | |
|---|---|
| **DEVELOPER** | ACTIVISION |
| **PUBLISHER** | NINTENDO |
| **PLAYERS** | 1-2 |
| **MEMORY CARD PAGES** | 10 |
| **GBA LINK-UP** | NO |
| **SURROUND SOUND** | NO |
| **WIDESCREEN** | NO |

**WHEN'S IT OUT?**
*X-Men: Next Dimension* will be out in the shops now on PAL and NTSC. Rejoice, people! Rejoice!

**COST: £40**

The X-Men are, of course, a creation of comic book genius. A strong ensemble cast, and a brilliant underlying metaphor of alienation, prejudice and persecution that cut to the heart of the race issues that were reaching boiling point at the time (the 1960s). And one of the most important creations in an underappreciated medium is now, at long last, a desperately average, churned-out Cube title. Joy.

What we have here is your basic, off-the-shelf, two-and-a-half-dimensional fighting game. The good guys are represented by Cyclops, Phoenix (not Jean Grey), Wolverine, Gambit, Rogue, Nightcrawler, Psylocke, Storm, Beast, Havok, and Forge. The baddies are Magneto, Juggernaut, Mystique, Toad, Sabretooth, Bastion, and Prime Sentinels Male and Female. Some are unlockable, but it's likely your interest will have waned long before you get to that point.

The Story mode is usually the most interesting in these games, but we're sad to say that this one isn't a particularly strong example. The main drawback is that you are following a fairly strict plot, so your choice of fighter is usually limited to one of only four or five. To get all the way through it, you need a solid understanding of pretty much every single warrior. Why isn't there a plot-line that alters depending on a character you use all the way through?

This game smells – nay, reeks – of mediocrity. If it was really, truly diabolical, we could have lots of fun ripping it into tiny pieces, but it's merely uninspiring. The four main buttons are your two punches and kicks. The L-button throws enemies, the R-button counters, and... oh, sorry! Nearly drifted off there. All you have to do is button mash until your power meter fills up, then execute an easy, high-damage super move. They look fairly pretty, and, well... that's it.

It's not a bad game, don't get us wrong. You might want to buy it. But you don't NEED to buy it.

TOM MAYO



- Some nice-looking super moves.
- All your favourite mutants to choose from.



- Dull, dull, dull. Duller than this sentence.
- Looks rubbish.
- Save up for *SC2*.



**IF YOU LIKE THIS...**
**Bloody Roar: Primal Fury**
Activision
NGC/68 74%
Decent enough beat-'em-up with animals.



**6 VISUALS**
Camera problems, some half-finished-looking models, but not bad.

**5 SOUNDS**
Not usually a beat-'em-up's forte, and this is no exception.

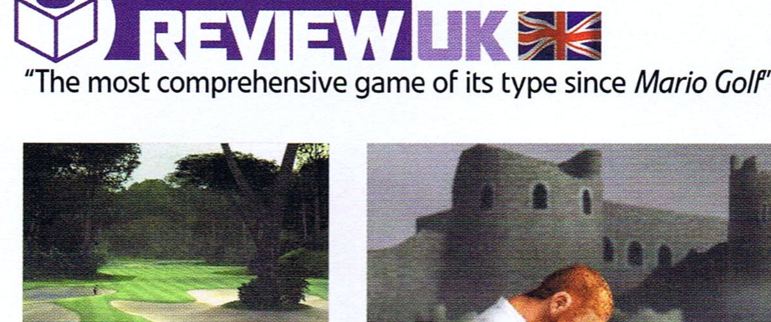
**6 MASTERY**
A competent enough fighter, but not a hardware-pusher.

**4 LIFESPAN**
Having spent cash on it, you'll play it just to get your money's worth.

**VERDICT**
**An utterly average fighting game that doesn't do anything seriously wrong, but displays no glimpses of genius, either.**



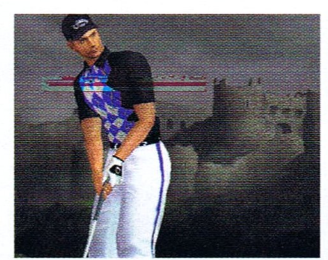


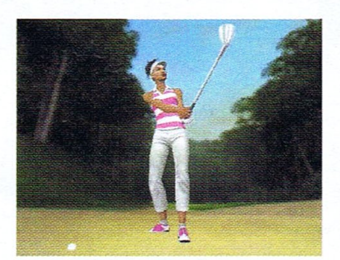
# REVIEW UK

"The most comprehensive game of its type since *Mario Golf*"

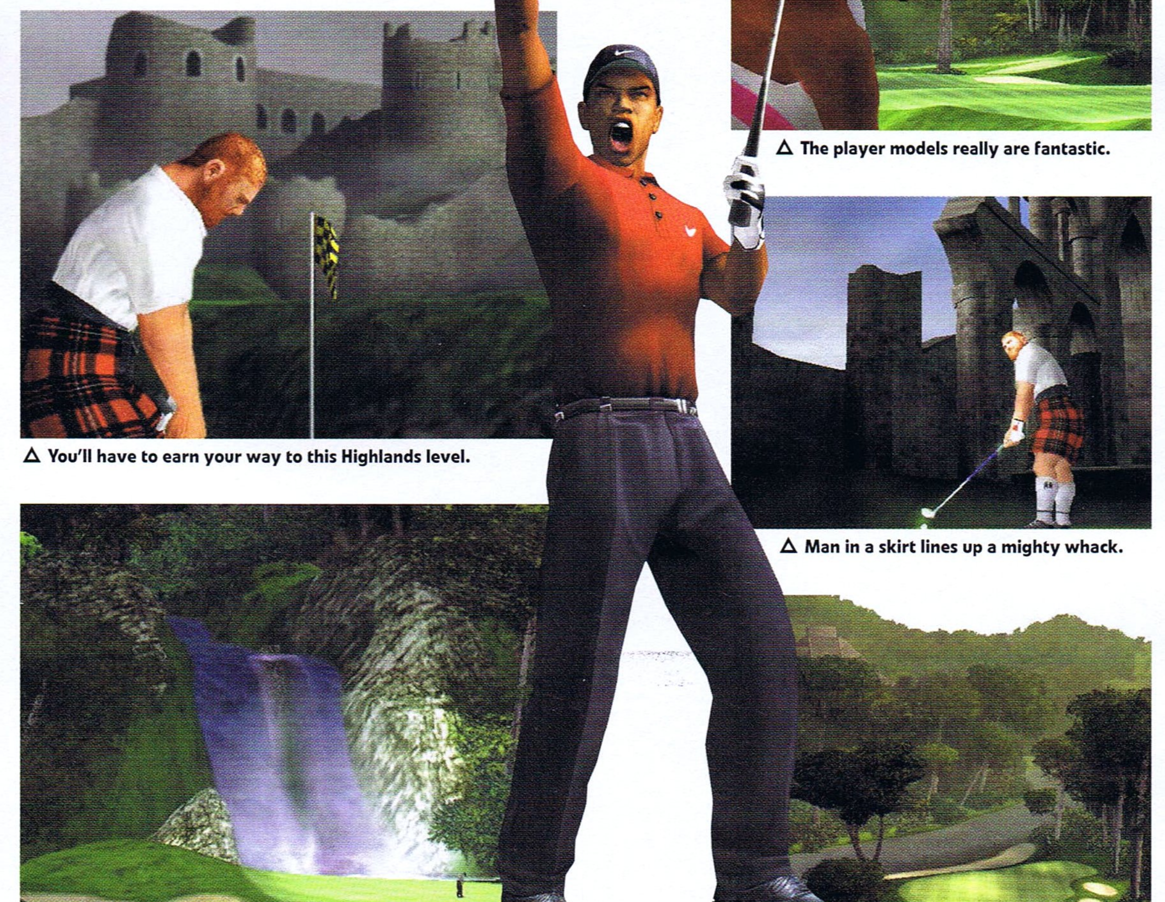
△ The grass can sometimes seem a bit flat, but that's no big deal.



△ Putting. The computer will tell you where to aim, if you like.



△ Nail the analogue swing to see one of these camera views.



△ You'll have to earn your way to this Highlands level.

△ The player models really are fantastic.

△ Man in a skirt lines up a mighty whack.

△ Bet membership isn't cheap at this flash course.

△ Best watch out for those bunkers below.

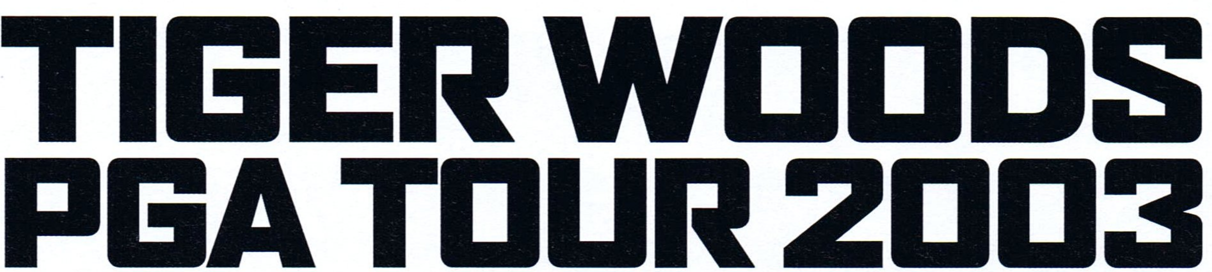


**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER | EA |
| PUBLISHER | EA |
| PLAYERS | 1–4 |
| MEMORY CARD PAGES | 12 |
| GBA LINK-UP | NO |
| SURROUND SOUND | NO |
| WIDESCREEN | NO |

**WHEN'S IT OUT?**
This piece of summer sports fun should be out right now. The same day as this magazine.

**COST: £40**



# TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003

## Bag of sticks? *Check*. Pocketful of balls? *Check*. It's all systems go for another pleasant stroll in the park…



As monstrously wealthy as he is, Tiger Woods still manages to find time to make some extra pocket money from his videogames sideline. But of course they wouldn't sell if they weren't any good, and this first Gamecube outing is surprisingly well-crafted.

For starters, it has to be the most comprehensive game of its type since *Mario Golf*, with a ton of game modes and unlockable extras. As well as the standard tournaments and challenges, a scenario mode drops you into a round at a crucial moment, with the controller thumping along to your golfer's heartbeat. Skill Zone offers further minigames for target practice, Speed Golf gives you a first-person view as you sprint around the course hitting balls, and a selection of fantasy courses and golfers are among the rewards for doing well in the Career Mode.

*Tiger Woods 2003* does away with the old power meter, replacing it with a system that's a little harder to judge correctly, but more fun once you've learned its many quirks. To swing the club, you draw back the stick to set the amount of power, then slam it forward to hit the ball. The straighter and faster you move it, the better the shot. Moving the stick diagonally makes the shot draw or fade, and hammering Z as you do this adds power – usually at the expense of accuracy. Further taps on the uncomfortable Z-button will make the ball spin in flight, so you can see where it's going to bounce, then have it spin back or to the side. Score a decent shot and you get all sorts of crazy Matrix-style camera angles as the ball trails fire, or a view of Tiger Woods furrowing his brow in a very Tiger Woods sort of way. It looks great.

The stuff we didn't like? The rock music soundtrack is pretty dire, and sometimes we wish EA Sports games would just let us get on and play, rather than smothering everything in layer upon layer of seen-it-all-before presentation. It's all a bit overcooked at times. For example, if you want to have a simple look around the course, you have to wait while the camera goes into blur-o-vision mode and whooshes up the fairway.

But anyway, those are minor quibbles, and some people might enjoy all the special effects. It's the best golf game we've seen in ages, despite being an American beauty.

MARTIN KITTS



- Realistic players.
- Loads of game modes.
- In-flight ball control.
- Good commentary.



- US rock music on the menu screens.
- Can be tricky to judge medium-strength shots.



**IF YOU LIKE THIS...**
**Ace Golf**
Eidos
NGC/74 74%
Cartoony Japanese take on the noble art of sticksie-ball.



**8 VISUALS**
Lush courses and a very expressive model of Tiger Woods.



**6 SOUNDS**
The music doesn't suit the sport but the commentary is useful.

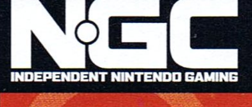
**7 MASTERY**
Some interesting new ideas as far as the control method goes.



**8 LIFESPAN**
The game is huge, and if it grabs you, it won't let go for weeks.

**VERDICT**

**Undignified it may be, but *Mario Golf GC* will have its work cut out to top this latest, flashiest effort from Tiger and the team.**









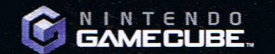



LUCAS Arts




PlayStation 2



NINTENDO
GAMECUBE

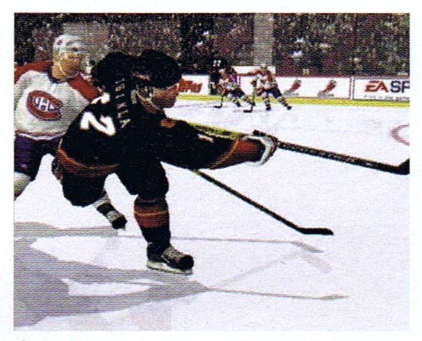
"*Knockout Kings* feels like a much weightier package than *Rocky*"



△ As you'd expect, all the player rosters are up to date, with some good likenesses of the stars.



△ Each player has a range of moves that add more depth and strategy to the proceedings.



△ Unfortunately, the game lacks both the pace and fluidity of Midway's superior *NHL Hitz*.



△ Manual dekes using the C-stick let you fend off would-be defenders from your puck.

# NHL 2003

**INFO BURST**

**DEVELOPER** EA
**PUBLISHER** EA
**PLAYERS** 1-4
**MEMORY CARD PAGES** 30
**OUT** NOW
**COST** £30



## Strap on your ice skates and sharpen your stick…

Apart from Midway's respectable *Hitz* series, this is the only ice hockey game currently available on Gamecube – and for a company that's been banging them out for over ten years, you'd think EA would be able to deliver the most enjoyable version. Well surprise, surprise: they can't. It's not far off, though…

Taking a more (cough) 'realistic' approach to this most unrealistic of sports, you won't find the kind of fast paced over-the-top action you get from Midway's games here. Instead, the speed is brought down a notch or two, with a greater emphasis on players who have a more varied repertoire of moves. This is no bad thing – especially if you're something of a purist and find *Hitz* too simplistic and shallow.

The main difference that you'll notice to the controls is the manual 'dekes' which you can access using the C-stick. This allows you to skate in any direction while manipulating your stick and puck around you simultaneously. It mightn't sound like much, but it makes a great deal of difference when you're defending the puck from incoming opponents or setting up which angle you want to shoot from.

Also, in contrast to *NHL Hitz* there are more modes and unlockables to uncover as you progress – structurally-speaking, there's far more depth to EA's skater. However, despite these worthy additions, it still doesn't sit right – it just isn't as much fun to play as *NHL Hitz*.

To start with, *2003* is significantly slower, and this is made to feel much worse when the ebb and flow is broken up with needless replay cutaways, high-five cut-scenes and inane jabber from the 'amusing' commentators. On more than one occasion we found ourselves hammering the buttons in a frustrated attempt to get back into the action. Not bad, but for all its pretentions, EA's hockey sim bogs itself down into being rather less than the sum of its parts.






△ Hits – although suffering from slightly dodgy collision detection – always look pleasingly violent.

# KNOCKOUT KINGS 2003

**INFO BURST**

**DEVELOPER** EA
**PUBLISHER** EA
**PLAYERS** 1-2
**MEMORY CARD PAGES** 30
**OUT** NOW
**COST** £40



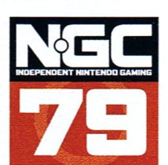
## Another month, another boxer. EA has *Rocky* on the ropes…



And we thought *Rocky* was good. Now EA have come up with a plucky challenger that's not only quite smart, but is easily on a par with Rage's respectable Balboa effort, reviewed last month.

Initially quite tricky to get your head around, *Knockout Kings* is a different breed of box-'em-up from *Rocky*. The control system and camera movement is markedly different from *Rocky*'s semi-permanent side view. Instead, the camera is far more dynamic, rotating and zooming in on the action as you move around the ring. To compensate, the control system works by using Left and Right to rotate your boxer around your opponent while forward and back moves your boxer closer and farther away from your target. This can be disorientating but it soon becomes second nature. Once this happens, you can concentrate on tightening up your technique while learning the combos necessary for a speedy knockdown.

*Knockout Kings* feels like a much weightier package than *Rocky* – offering plenty of modes as well as a create-a-boxer function that allows you to embark on a career. Atmospheric and visually impressive, it's possibly the most absorbing boxer on GC.






△ The camera and arenas are much more dynamic than in *Rocky*.

**FIGHT!** Before boxing was added to the ancient Olympics in 688BC, the Greeks had an earlier form of the sport that involved two pugilists sitting on opposite tablets of stone, from which they thumped each other until one was knocked out. Sounds like fun…

"*Enter the Dragonfly* is an incredibly basic platformer"



△ Spyro's quest for dragonflies.



△ The little dragon can glide using his stumpy wings. Bless.



△ Spyro can run to get around faster, but if he touches anything he comes to a complete stop and falls over. A bit annoying, that feature is.



△ Nnnneeeeowww! It's minigame time for Spyro.



△ Spyro belches some pixellated flames at a baddie.



△ Hmm, now let's think… This'll be the slippery ice-world level, filled with snow.



△ He's cute, but cute doesn't cut it when you're starring in a game like this one.



△ A fine demonstration of breath indeed.

# SPYRO: ENTER THE DRAGONFLY

## Welcome to Nintendo. The former PlayStation mascot fails to impress on his Gamecube debut. Surprised?

Not so many years ago, Spyro and the loathsome Crash Bandicoot were touted as the PlayStation's answer to Mario. In the light of this month's Gamecube showing for both characters, such claims seem ludicrous.

*Enter the Dragonfly* is an incredibly basic platformer, obviously aimed at very young children, and coded without the technical expertise that, at least, made the PlayStation editions reasonably nice to look at.

It's a very bad port from the PS2 version. The frame-rate is so poor, there's a constant trail of after-images left behind objects as they flicker across the screen. In a game as light on graphical complexity as this one, it's inexcusable – particularly since the PS2 version doesn't suffer from the problem to such an extent. We thought the days of sub-standard Gamecube conversions of multi-format games had vanished with *SSX Tricky* and *Tony Hawk's 3*. We were mistaken.

And it's not as if there's a great deal in the tedious, derivative gameplay that could make you excuse *Enter The Dragonfly* its brain-aching graphics anyway.

The aim is to find a bunch of dragonflies, which Spyro must capture by breathing bubbles on them. The little dragon can also breathe fire, ice and lightning, all of which will come in handy for solving the simple puzzles scattered throughout the game.

There are also a few vehicles to control, including a tank and a UFO, in a selection of minigame levels. Various characters offer advice (the same thing over and over again, in many cases), and Spyro has a limited range of moves for navigating the platforms and ledges that form the bulk of the game.

If you've owned any sort of console for the last few years, you'll probably have seen all of this before. Usually done a lot better, too. Think *Gex* for the N64, or *Taz* for the Gamecube, and you'll have a good idea of the kind of quality we're talking about here.

Okay, so it's targeted at an audience that, many developers seem to assume, isn't quite as discerning as older, more critically aware gamers. But when things like *Mario Sunshine* and *Luigi's Mansion* are available to the same market, and will appeal to almost everyone, there's simply no place for the likes of *Enter The Dragonfly*. Especially since £40 is hardly a pocket-money price for something this rough.

MARTIN KITTS

### INFO BURST

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER | CHECK SIX |
| PUBLISHER | UNIVERSAL |
| PLAYERS | 1 |
| MEMORY CARD PAGES | 8 |
| GBA LINK-UP | NO |
| SURROUND SOUND | NO |
| WIDESCREEN | NO |

**WHEN'S IT OUT?**
You'll see this little beauty at all good software shops right now. You might want to avoid it.



**COST: £40**



- It's easy enough for a four-year-old to play.
- Erm…



- Welcome to Jerksville.
- Tedious gameplay.
- It simply isn't worth spending money on.



**IF YOU LIKE THIS…**
**Super Mario Sunshine**
Nintendo
**NGC/73 96%**
By far the best game of its type right now.



**3 VISUALS**
Why is it so jerky? Seriously, this is shockingly poor stuff.



**4 SOUNDS**
Music and speech. You know the drill – it's typical platform fare.

**3 MASTERY**
Worse than the PS2 version, which itself isn't great. Says it all, really.

**4 LIFESPAN**
Seems fairly big, but there's not a huge amount of challenge.



**VERDICT**
**A graphically dodgy conversion of a PS2 game that wasn't incredibly good to begin with. We're not impressed.**






MORE MISSIONS.
MORE MAYHEM.
MORE WRECKLESS.

ALL-NEW FOR THE PLAYSTATION®2 COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM AND NINTENDO GAMECUBE™

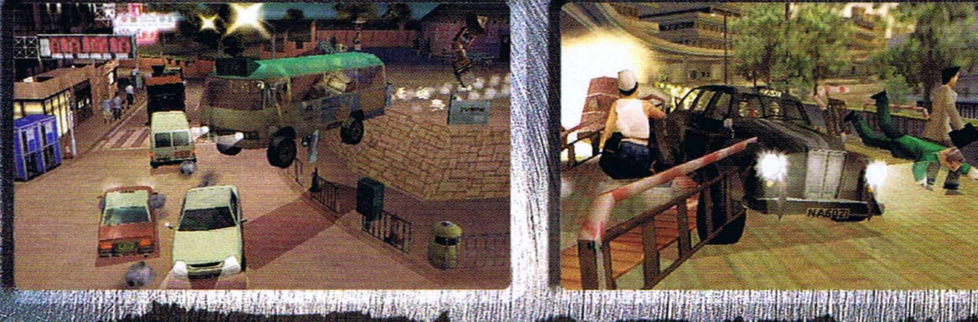
WRECKLESS
THE YAKUZA MISSIONS™

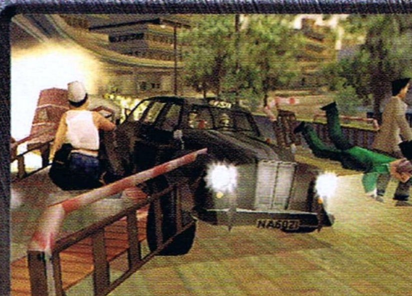
ORIGINAL HIT AVAILABLE ON XBOX™ VIDEO GAME SYSTEM

Screenshots taken from PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system gameplay.









Blast away enemies with new CAR-MOUNTED ROCKET LAUNCHERS and blast away friends in MULTIPLAYER showdowns.

Drive down the mob in high-speed pursuits, then explore the city at your pace in EXCLUSIVE FREE ROAM CHALLENGES.

Take on the cut-throat Yakuza mafia as a top-level cop or spy in 40 INSANE MISSIONS —double the number of the original hit.

For even more high-impact action, DON'T BRAKE FOR PEDESTRIANS. Now if they get in your way, they're gonna pay.

























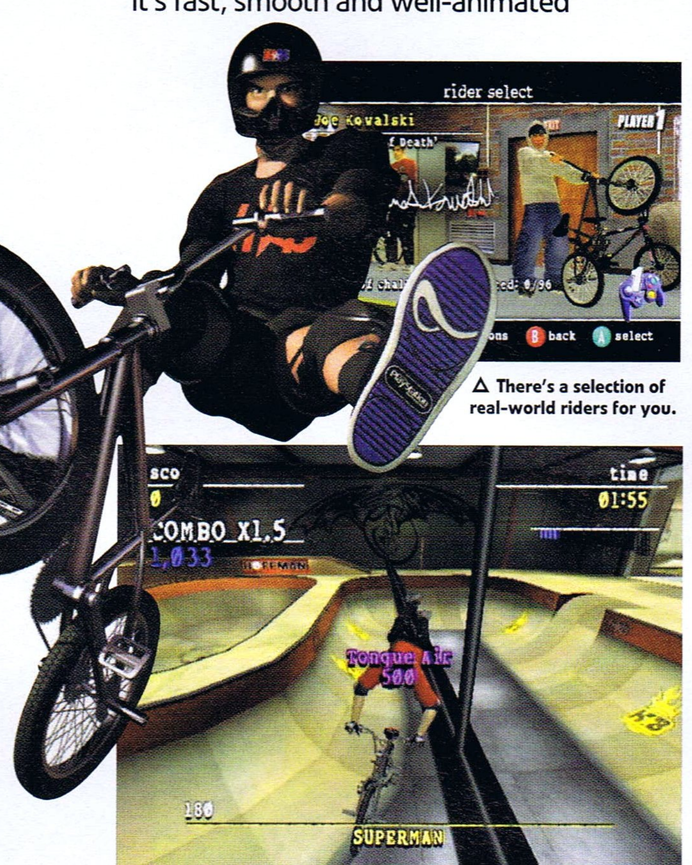




activision.com



"It's fast, smooth and well-animated"




△ There's a selection of real-world riders for you.

△ The first level is a pretty uninspired warehouse affair. Not the best level in the world, but it helps you practise the basics.



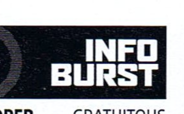

△ As usual, the best way of linking tricks is to grind between them – manuals are available, too.




△ It mightn't look anything special, but it runs very smoothly – better than *Tony Hawk's 4*.




△ Later levels offer much more freedom and you have to work quite hard to discover the best lines.



**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER | GRATUITOUS |
| PUBLISHER | ACTIVISION |
| PLAYERS | 1-2 |
| MEMORY CARD PAGES | 18 |
| RUMBLE FUNCTION | YES |
| GBA LINK-UP | NO |
| SURROUND SOUND | NO |
| WIDESCREEN | NO |

**WHEN'S IT OUT?**
By the time you read this, you'll find it in most stores of games.




**COST: £40**

# MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2

## Sounds like a load of old superman indian air and… er, no-handed fakie-flips if you ask us…

What with this month's *Tony Hawk's 4, Mat Hoffman* is going to have a rough time of besting the grand old man of extreme trick sports – and just as you might expect, it doesn't really measure up in any individual category.

That's not to say *Mat Hoffman* is by any means a poor game. A year ago we might well have been singing its praises. It's certainly fast and smooth (there's hardly ever a drop in frame-rate), and the riders are very well animated. The main problem is just that there's nothing out of the ordinary in there – there's nothing much that hasn't already been done way back, in something like *Tony Hawk's 2*.

So, you have the usual smash-through-or-collect-five-objects malarkey. You have the standard top-the-requisite-number-of-points-in-the-allotted-time challenge, and you even have the bust-x-skill-over-y-obstacle objectives, and so in this respect you'd be forgiven for getting a faintly irritating sense of déjà-vu.

This feeling of familiarity extends to the courses, too. You have to wall-ride buttons to open up the arena on the first course, for example, and again, your progression through each is sub-divided into amateur, semi-pro and professional categories with trickier goals to complete each time. Sounds familiar, doesn't it? It's no bad thing, though, especially when it's all been executed so well, but it would have been nice to have had at least *something* new and refreshing to get the old teeth into.

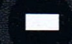
> **"AN ACCOMPLISHED EXAMPLE OF THE GENRE – JUST DON'T EXPECT ANYTHING REVOLUTIONARY"**

If you're a BMX nut, there's very little in here to fault. As a package there's plenty to get to grips with, and with the now-requisite park editor and multiplayer modes, you'll be plugging away at it for some time to come. An accomplished example of the genre, for sure – just don't expect anything particularly special or revolutionary.

**GERAINT EVANS**



- Fast and very smooth.
- Smart level editor.
- Some very well designed courses.



- Nothing original.
- Will only really appeal to fans of the sport.
- *Tony Hawk's* is better.



**IF YOU LIKE THIS…**
**Tony Hawk's 4**
Activision
**NGC/75 85%**
The latest and best Hawk's title. Reviewed this issue.



**7 VISUALS**
Not amazingly detailed, but the action never jars or slows down.

**7 SOUNDS**
Nice tunes – not as much of the usual angry skate metal.

**6 MASTERY**
We've seen this done so many times now it's getting a bit silly.

**8 LIFESPAN**
If it's your cup of tea you'll be entertained for months to come.

**VERDICT**
**What it does, it does perfectly. BMX enthusiasts would do well to check it out, the rest of us can take it or leave it.**










### YOUR CAR
*There are loads of cars to unlock, and at the start of every mission you can choose which weapon you want mounted on the top. You can also pull off some smart stunts by getting as much air as you can and spinning around mid-jump.*

### WEAPONS
*These are essential to success – and many are quite inventive. Whether you're catapulting oil barrels at enemies, or driving up next to them and mincing their tyres with your wheel spikes, these are always the making or breaking of any victory.*

### TRACKS
*Pretty expansive, with loads of ramps, vertical inclines and banked turns for you to use to your advantage – or you can earn points by using them as platforms from which to pull your stunts.*

### GAME STATS
*The borders around your screen provide a handy map so you can get your bearings, as well as the usual damage indicator and ammo indicator. Get too messed up and it's game over, so make sure you land those stunts.*

### INFO BURST

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER | THQ |
| PUBLISHER | THQ |
| PLAYERS | 1-2 |
| MEMORY CARD PAGES | 5 |
| GBA LINK-UP | NO |
| SURROUND SOUND | NO |
| WIDESCREEN | NO |

**WHEN'S IT OUT?**
*Hot Wheels* is out on the 29th November – that's most likely about now, then.



**COST: £40**

# HOT WHEELS VELOCITY X

**What do you mean you're not excited!** It's the old Hot Wheels! Cars! Stunts! Anyone? Oh, never mind.

Not exactly the most hotly anticipated game on the planet – but even so, the toy car franchise does offer plenty of potential for turning itself into an half-decent, worthwhile title.

Sadly, though, none of this potential has been tapped by the shoddy *Hot Wheels: Velocity X*.

At its heart, it's a title aimed at younger gamers, with its cheesy Saturday morning cartoon-style FMV spread throughout the game, and a complete lack of subtlety makes the controls strangely and instantly accessible to even the most inept, ten-thumbed of gamers.

Initially, things are quite entertaining. The environments are solid and nicely detailed – if unspectacular – and there is a certain modicum of enjoyment to be had from driving around and exploring the multi-pathed courses.

The main bulk of the game is the Adventure mode, which gives you a series of objectives for each track. These revolve around getting from point A to point B, or taking out the requisite number of enemy cars using the weapon pick-ups littering the tracks. On top of this you also have different modes (like multiplayer) that allow you to battle it out for supremacy or indulge in some straightforward racing, as well as having a host of unlockable weapons, vehicles and arenas.

**"THE TOY CAR FRANCHISE OFFERS PLENTY OF POTENTIAL FOR TURNING ITSELF INTO A HALF-DECENT TITLE"**

All very well and good, but the lack of refinement in the enemy cars and controls makes playing it rather unexciting after a few days, and seasoned gamers will grow tired of it very quickly. In comparison to something like the N64's underrated *Rush 2049* it never excels itself, and rarely nudges into anything other than mediocre territory. Simple stuff that should maybe be reserved for younger gamers – but even then, we'd advise caution.

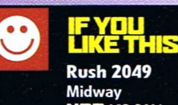
GERAINT EVANS



- Big tracks.
- Plenty of unlockables.
- Loads of modes.
- Initially accessible.



- Poor enemy car AI.
- No subtlety or depth to the controls.
- Just plain average.



**IF YOU LIKE THIS...**
**Rush 2049**
Midway
NGC/48 91%
The best exploration free-form racer on a Nintendo platform.



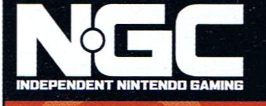
**5 VISUALS**
Not awful, but the courses and cars are still unimpressive.

**4 SOUNDS**
Pretty unremarkable, with unexciting tunes and bog-standard FX.

**5 MASTERY**
*Rush 2049* was bigger better and slicker – and that was on the N64.

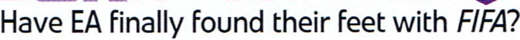
**6 LIFESPAN**
The best aspect of the game. Loads to unlock and plenty of modes.

**VERDICT**
Subtle as a sledgehammer, bland and ultimately quite tedious – which makes it very difficult to recommend at all.







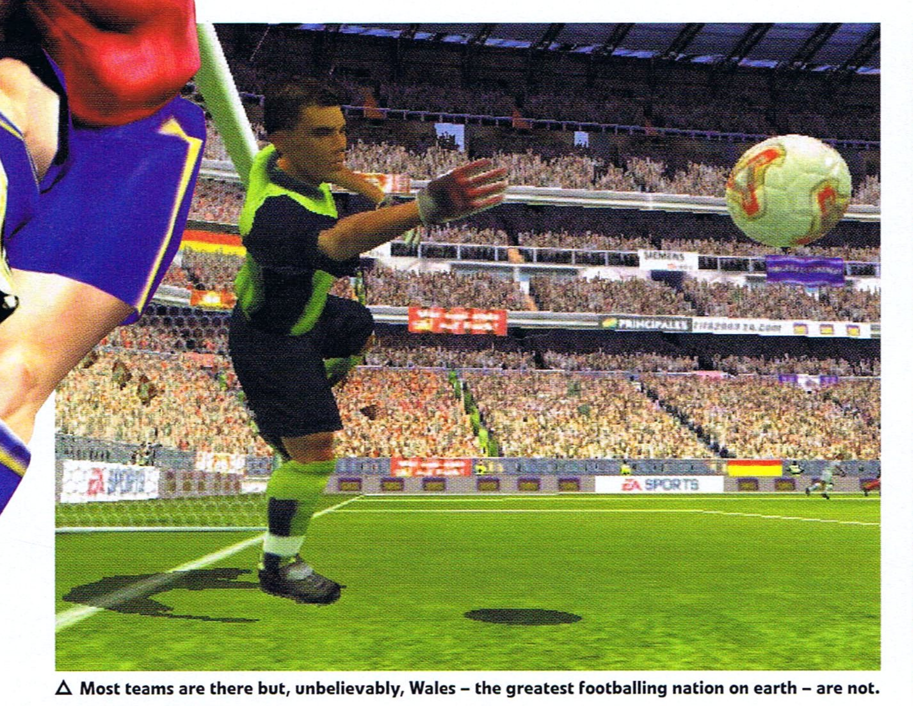

Paul's pigs – a sound investment.

△ Undoubtedly the best character likenesses so far.


△ While players seem to drift over the surface of the pitch at times…



△ … the actual experience of playing has improved no end.



△ Most teams are there but, unbelievably, Wales – the greatest footballing nation on earth – are not.

**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER | EA |
| PUBLISHER | EA |
| PLAYERS | 1-4 |
| MEMORY CARD PAGES | 54 |
| GBA LINK-UP | NO |
| SURROUND SOUND | NO |
| WIDESCREEN | NO |

**WHEN'S IT OUT?**
It's out now. That's N.O.W. In the shops. In the shops now. Now shop now now shop shop. NOW!




**COST: £40**

# FIFA 2003

## **From the Conference** to the Premier League. EA deliver a footie sim that's a genuine title contender…

Sweet Lord! Can it be true? Could it be that we've discovered a *FIFA* game that *doesn't* make us want to retch with utter loathing and disgust? It would seem so – and despite certain 'issues', overall impressions of the latest *FIFA* are very good indeed. Lawks!

> **"DESPITE CERTAIN 'ISSUES', OVERALL IMPRESSIONS OF THE LATEST FIFA ARE VERY GOOD INDEED. LAWKS!"**

The front end is all very slick and extremely well-presented, with the usual wealth of options you've come to expect. As the licence suggests, you also have correct player names for all the teams as well as the correct kits – so far so same. But if you have an understandably inherent reluctance to waste any more money on one of EA's *FIFA* games, you might be pleasantly surprised. As far as benchmarks go, the PS2's *Pro Evoloution Soccer* still reigns supreme as the ultimate example of the genre, but EA's latest effort isn't too wide off the mark. Ignoring the fact that the players seem somewhat detached from the playing surface, the actual flow of the game and the movement of the players is far more pleasing than before. While there isn't *quite* as much depth to the players' abilities as found in *Pro Evolution*, the range of cheeky lobs, through balls, intricate passing moves and one-twos make for a thoroughly engaging game, that is both challenging in single-player and intricate enough to make multi-player games highly competitive. The four-player in particular (once you've tweaked the camera view to show more of the pitch) is superb, with enough options to make games accessible to both novices and the experienced alike. Slow, jerky, unintuitive, rushed, and one-dimensional: these are adjectives that might apply to previous *FIFA*s, but certainly not this one.

After the other yawnsome sports sims this month, this has cheered us up no end – in fact, it's the best footie game on Gamecube so far. Did we really just say that?

**GERAINT EVANS**

**+**
- Depth and subtlety to the controls.
- Loads of teams, options and modes.

**–**
- Players seem detached from the field.
- Cymru-free.
- No Wales, either.



**IF YOU LIKE THIS…**
**ISS2**
**NGC/68 83%**
**A slightly below par *ISS* for Cube – and, amazingly, not quite as good as *FIFA*…**



**7 VISUALS**
It looks great, but there are some very weird moments of slowdown.

**7 SOUNDS**
Decent, if oddly inappropriate music and bog-standard FX.

**6 MASTERY**
Some slowdown at times, and the camera isn't exactly perfect.

**9 LIFESPAN**
Both single-player and multiplayer will last you absolutely ages.

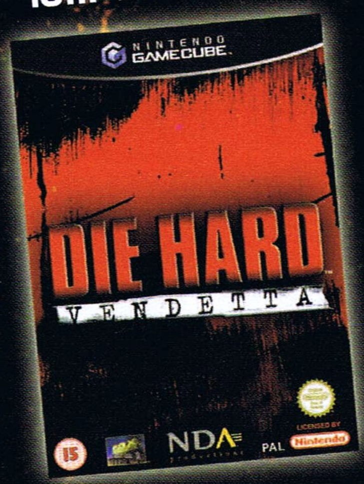
**VERDICT**
**Best EA sim in recent memory and the first time we've been able to recommend it. A must for GC-owning footie fans.**





# IT'S TIME FOR A LITTLE PAYBACK

Available
15th November




Exclusively on
Nintendo GameCube





**"A top first-person shooter that scores heavily in virtually every department. - 92%"** GForce Magazine



DIE HARD™
VENDETTA
FOX INTERACTIVE
bits studios
NDA productions
NINTENDO GAMECUBE™

"Much like *Battle for Naboo*, the main focus is in ground-level battling"

**POWER LEVEL**
*This bar powers anything depending on the craft. Whether it's your lasers, turbo boost or shield, it will regenerate over time.*

**WINGMAN COMMANDS**
*Works just like in the ones in Rogue Leader – by stabbing each D-pad direction you can tell your support craft guys to attack, defend you, break free or regroup. Great!*

**LOCK-ON**
*This appears when you have a lock on an enemy. The bar on the right of the reticule indicates how much health your target has left.*

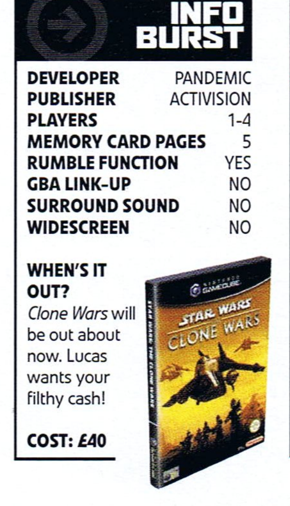
**SHIELDS**
*Once your shields have been depleted, one direct hit will waste you. This can be replenished with health pick-ups.*

**RADAR**
*Keep your peepers on this little baby and it will pointy-point-point you in the direction of enemies. Hurrah for radar!*

**SECONDARY WEAPON**
*Tells you how many missiles and suchlike you have left. Replenish this with ammo pick-ups.*

# STAR WARS THE CLONE WARS

**Take your part in an epic space rumble** in a galaxy far far away…




**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| **DEVELOPER** | PANDEMIC |
| **PUBLISHER** | ACTIVISION |
| **PLAYERS** | 1-4 |
| **MEMORY CARD PAGES** | 5 |
| **RUMBLE FUNCTION** | YES |
| **GBA LINK-UP** | NO |
| **SURROUND SOUND** | NO |
| **WIDESCREEN** | NO |

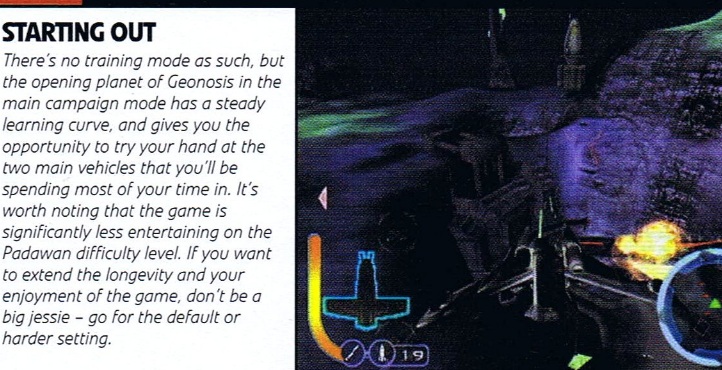
**WHEN'S IT OUT?**
*Clone Wars* will be out about now. Lucas wants your filthy cash!

**COST: £40**



## GET INTO THE GAME
**We get you into the swing of things, nice and easy like…**

**STARTING OUT**
*There's no training mode as such, but the opening planet of Geonosis in the main campaign mode has a steady learning curve, and gives you the opportunity to try your hand at the two main vehicles that you'll be spending most of your time in. It's worth noting that the game is significantly less entertaining on the Padawan difficulty level. If you want to extend the longevity and your enjoyment of the game, don't be a big jessie – go for the default or harder setting.*



Cast your minds *waaaay* back to issue 53 when we reviewed the so-so *Battle for Naboo* for the N64. Can't remember it? Then let us fill you in. It was in actual fact the 'sequel' to the hugely successful *Rogue Squadron*. Loosely based on Episode I, it took a more ground-based approach to the *Rogue* formula, by offering the chance to pilot speeders and gunboats for land missions, and bombers and fighters for air-to-ground assaults.

Now we have *Clone Wars*, which, while not developed by *Factor 5*, has a number of similarities to *Naboo*, insofar as it's set around the time of the first three films and, much like in *Naboo*, the main focus is ground-level battling. The structure of the game is also very similar. While the missions take you to a number of different planets,



**MULTIPLAYER**
***There is one – but we'd hardly call it fun. It all feels like a tacked-on afterthought, with a sluggish frame-rate and four-player encounters that involve you strafing and shooting laser beams at each other. There is, however, a redeeming feature – the Conquest games that have four players in teams of two, attacking and defending bases and outposts.***

## IN THE DRIVING SEAT

*Clone Wars* has plenty of vehicles to commandeer. Here's a selection…











### FIGHTER TANK

*This is the vehicle you'll spend most of your time in. Quite a speedy little number, it strafes like a dream, allowing you to weave in and out of trouble, while its missiles and lasers make light work of most enemies you encounter. Moreover, it's a joy to pilot.*

### GUNSHIP

*This is used for aerial assaults. Fairly slow in its movements, it more than makes up for things with its devastating charged high-power beams that can take down multiple enemies with ease. Its powerful cluster missiles and standard lasers are the icing on the cake.*

### ASSAULT WALKER

*Slow and cumbersome, there's not much going for this initially – until you get the hang of it. The rotating turret makes up for a lack of strafe function, while its devastating lasers and mortar shells can help decimate the enemy in seconds. It also has a temporary shield.*

### SPEEDER BIKE

*Rarely used, but the Speeder Bike is great fun while it lasts. The turbo boost is stupidly fast, making it great for pursuing Federation droids or escaping imminent danger. Shame that no racing-style multiplayer minigame was bundled in using these things.*

### MARU

*Indigenous to the Wookiee homeworld of Kashyyyk, these huge beasts are pretty quick. The rear-mounted bowcasters are powerful enough to deal with most enemies, while their thermal detonators and pulse emitters can take out pretty much everything else you have to fight.*




△ These spidery enemies pack a powerful – and unavoidable – homing laser.

△ The walker is slow but very powerful.

the mix of all-out fighting, reconnaissance, defending and escorting remains. You're required to follow your radar (or in this case, arrow) to each location before participating in mini-skirmishes that revolve around clearing an area of enemies, defending a group of transports or mission-critical craft, removing barricades, or taking down military installations. To add a little diversity to the proceedings, there are also a number of more straightforward missions to take part in, such as pursuing STAP-riding droids across junk-filled terrain, or escaping a wave of Force-sucking neon death as you speed through the forests of Kashyyyk.

> THE ACTION IS FAST AND SLICK, IF A LITTLE ARCADEY, AND THE FRAME-RATE HOLDS UP REMARKABLY WELL

### EPISODE 2.5

The game starts where Episode II tails off. Taking control of a Republic Hover Tank you have to race to the arena on Geonosis to rescue Anakin and Amidala, before taking part in the battle at the end of the film, where everything goes mental.

Initial impressions are very good. The environments, despite sporting a little bit of fog, are (give or take a couple of missions), suitably solid, detailed and expansive. The variation in locations, such as icy wastes, deserts, cratered moons and forests, are welcome, as is the pace with which the Gamecube copes with them all. The controls on the tanks and other vehicles are responsive, the action, while feeling quite arcadey, is fast and slick, and the frame-rate holds up remarkably well. By the time you get to the final stages of the level, you can't help but feel impressed. The sheer scale and intensity of the action around you is very pleasing, and you really get the impression that you're taking part in a massive all-out




△ You'll need to defend this cruiser from incoming mortar tanks that descend from the valley above you.



**DID YOU KNOW?** Kenny Baker and Anthony Daniels are the only actors to have starred in all five completed Star Wars films (as R2D2 and C3PO). But they weren't exactly the best of friends, apparently.

"There's a lot to like about *Clone Wars*"




△ Huge ships frequently patrol the skies – giving an often impressive sense of scale to the battles you participate in.



△ The sight of ground troops engaged in battle is commonplace – although they're purely cosmetic.



△ Escaping the Force-sucking blast on Kashyyyk is enthralling, but also one of the more ropey levels in the game.



△ Attack the outpost before rescuing Anakin.




△ Destroy the rocks to stop more enemies coming.

## THE DARK SIDE

*One very pleasing addition to the game is the inclusion of bosses. Ranging from similar ships to your own, to giant vessels and even ghosts, you'll normally encounter these at the end of a planetary campaign. Unfortunately, as initially entertaining as they are, you soon realise defeating them is a case of letting go of all your missiles until your health is low, before boosting over to pick-ups to replenish your stocks.*









intergalactic scrap.

Once you've passed Geonosis, you start treading new ground (as far as the Star Wars plot is concerned, anyway), although unfortunately, it's at this juncture that the game's flaws start to make themselves known – and ironically, they stem from the exact same aspects that make the game so impressive.

### THE FOG OF WAR

In a word, *Clone Wars* is hectic. There's so much going on in certain sections inside each level that, in the heat of battle, everything starts to get very confusing and it's exceptionally difficult to see anything, let alone focus your attention on specific targets. When you're at ground level and you have 50-plus targets to aim at, huge wheeled missile launchers speeding at you head-on, countless explosions ripping across your field of vision, and intense laser fire battering you from all directions, there's little more you can do than strafe from left to right pumping gunfire at anything your targeting system has the time to lock on to.

In some instances this isn't a bad thing, especially when there's a structure to the battlefield and enemies arrive in well-timed waves, but more often than not you just get the feeling that you're being overwhelmed by sheer numbers rather than being challenged by cunning mission design.

Naturally, the further through the game you progress, the more danger gets thrown at you (at least in terms of laser fire, if not the enemies themselves) and as a result, fighting through the game can feel like a very random experience, and therefore a somewhat laborious one too. Some sections, for example, you may find very easy on a single attempt only for them to feel unfairly difficult the next time you attempt them.

Thankfully, some of the confusion is alleviated by the targeting mechanism.

> "THERE'S SO MUCH GOING ON IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE THAT EVERYTHING STARTS TO GET VERY CONFUSING"



### I'M BORED

*"Hello. This is the voice of Anakin Skywalker speaking. Here's a tip for all you budding voice-actors out there – when commissioned to do a voice for a game, I always find it helps to sound as if I really couldn't give a toss. The more wooden I sound, the happier I am with the end result. Thanks for listening!"*

**DID YOU KNOW?** Harrison Ford wasn't The Beard's first choice for the role of Han Solo. Burt Reynolds originaly signed up for the role, but backed out before filming began. Oh well…

# ASSAULT ON GEONOSIS

The opening level of Geonosis is particularly exciting – it's just a shame this quality isn't evident in the entire game. Here are the highlights broken down for you…



**CANNON ATTACK**
*First things first. You have to knock out the Orbital Defence System around Geonosis. By battering the power generators around the giant cannons, you'll allow the Republic's army to land on the surface.*




**AWAITING THE CONVOY**
*You're going to need reinforcements next, so clear the landing platform of any enemies and wait for your convoy to arrive. Once they get to your position, you'll need to defend them from incoming forces.*




**DEFENCE IN THE VALLEY**
*Now for the tough part. You need to escort the convoy down a canyon defended by countless enemy units, gun turrets and huge laser-spitting spiders. Keep your ships intact until they reach the outpost.*



**TAKE TO THE SKIES**
*Once the outpost has fallen, it's time to get to your gunship for an aerial assault. Leg it across the battlefield, jump into the ship and take out the Techno Union's ships before they all escape.*



**STOP THE ESCAPE**
*Now destroy those giant domed transports. Help your assault cannons take them down by defending them from the Dooku's allies. Remember to get out of the way when the ships fall.*



**FINAL SHOWDOWN**
*With the opposition forces you have to get to Yoda and Dooku in the caves, but a trio of Dark Acolytes between you and your objective. These manoeuvrable sharp-shooters are the first 'bosses' you encounter.*

Unlike in *Rogue Leader*, when you swing your targeting reticule over an enemy, it locks on, letting you fire homing missiles and see how much life your target has left.

For the *most* part, this function is very handy. It allows you to circle-strafe your target easily without losing sight of them, and the visual cue for the damage they're taking allows you to accurately judge how much longer you need to keep shooting, or how many missiles you need to launch. But in practice, it's easier said than done. Because there's so much going on, you'll find that keeping a lock on a specific target can be very tricky, as it keeps jumping from target to target as enemies close in, or you get buffered around by suicidal vehicles.

### FORCE FEEDBACK

These are but mere gripes, however. There's a lot to like about *Clone Wars*, and there are a number of fantastic moments in the game – many of which are down to the scale of what's happening on screen – and these moments become more frequent the further through the game you get. While you're battling, huge dropships come down to deliver more allies or enemies. You'll swoop low over the battlefield and deliver forking beams of lasers at multiple targets simultaneously. You'll defend convoys against massive odds by directing your wingmen wisely, speed through wreckage at a blistering pace, and annihilate huge craft in a cheeky ambush. These moments are, admittedly, very satisfying – especially if you're successful



**PLOT SPOILER**
***The cut-scenes throw up some interesting plot points with regards to the Clone Wars themselves, and the Sith Wars before them. We assume, being a LucasArts title, that the plot details are correct – if so, it provides some intriguing revelations about Anakin's defection to the dark side…***





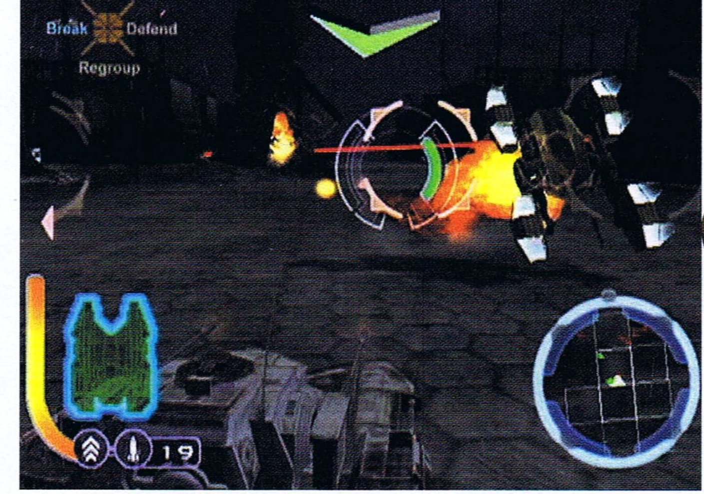

"There's a handful of superb levels, evenly spread out"



△ All ships have the ability to zoom in…



△ …to take out faraway enemies.




△ Missiles often send enemies tumbling out of control at high speed. Have it!



△ Control Mace Windu as you race for your gunship through legions of footsoldiers.




△ Your allied forces on the ground can be instrumental in completing objectives.




## FIELD OF PLAY

While much of the game is mediocre, there are some instances that'll have your eyes popping out on stalks…



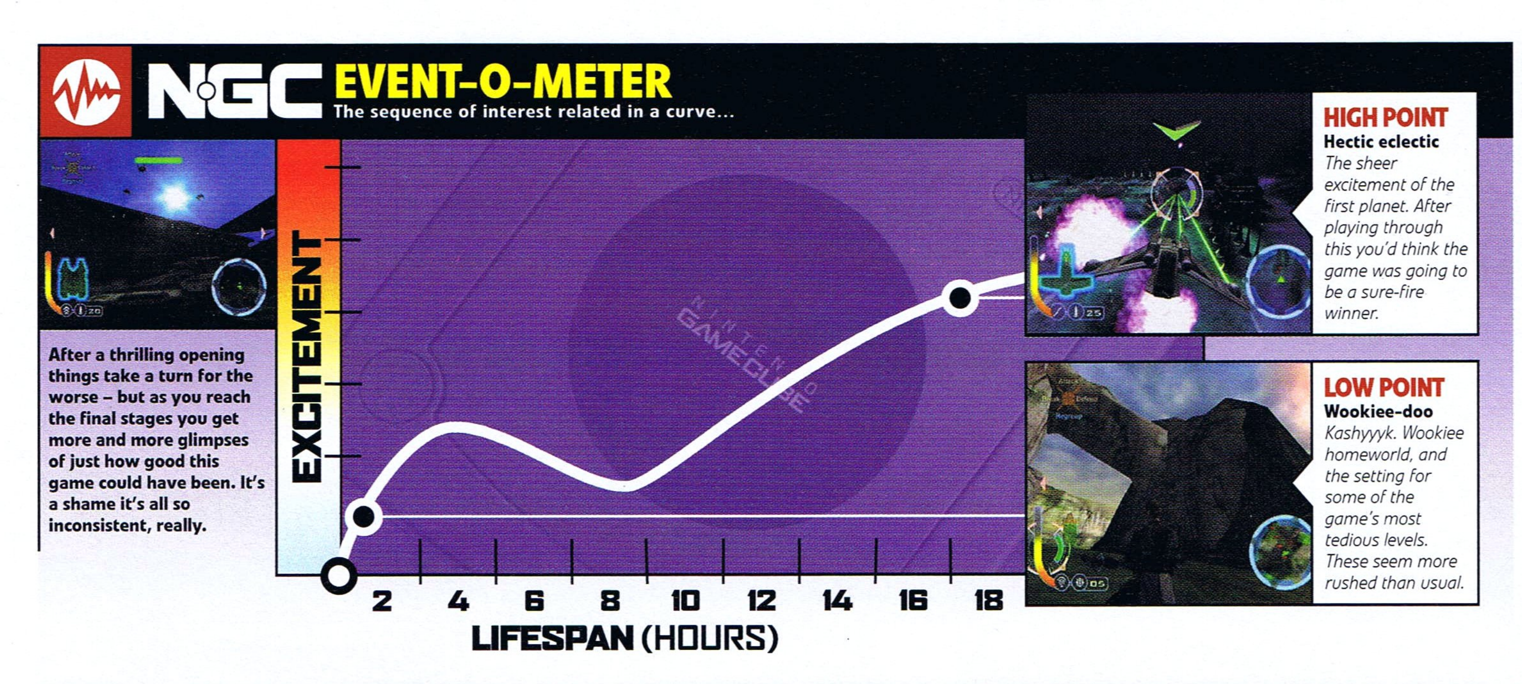



### HOW BIG?

*Defending a giant Republic battle cruiser, or taking down a Techno Union transporter. One thing remains the same – the size of the bloody things. How Pandemic managed to get them and the hundreds of units on the ground below to move so smoothly, we'll never know. Unless we ask them.*

### FRANTIC FIRE-FIGHTS

*Surviving a hellish battle with billowing smoke, tumbling vehicles, criss-crossing laser fire and hundreds of troops all cluttering your field of vision. If you can stay focused on what's going on, it's a joy to participate in.*








△ This green arrow always point the way to your target.



△ Sniping can be a great way to avoid excessive damage.




△ Although it's pretty much useless, you can use the C-stick to get a better view of your vehicle.

on the higher, ultra-challenging difficulty levels.

The trouble is, for every stand-out moment you witness there are plenty that are just plain boring and many more that are quite irritating. They're so uninspired you just want to slog through them in the hope that there'll be another slice of proper entertainment coming around the corner. *Clone Wars* often feels as though there's a handful of superb levels evenly spread out, with tedious filler levels in between (like those set on the Wookiee homeworld), which are both visually dull and devoid of the kind of excitement found in the other parts of the game. This isn't helped much by the fact that the game is set in unknown territory. Unlike in *Rogue Leader* you don't have the same atmosphere or sense of majesty about the campaigns you're taking part in, and so not even those poor levels can be carried on the back of any sense of nostalgia. The frequency of these dull levels also suggests that maybe the game was rushed out a little sooner than was absolutely necessary in order to make it out in time for Christmas. This in particular would be a real shame, because *Clone Wars* often shows genuine promise and it would be horrible to think that its potential was never reached because of a cynical desire to shift as many units as possible over the festive season. Activision would never stoop so low… would they?

## "FOR EVERY STAND-OUT MOMENT YOU WITNESS, THERE ARE PLENTY MORE THAT ARE JUST DULL AND IRRITATING"

On the whole, though, *Clone Wars* is an entertaining game, and probably (and obviously) more so if you're a massive Star Wars nut. But even if you're not, the frenetic blasting action is still fairly enjoyable, extremely challenging and you'll most certainly want to see it through to completion. Just don't buy it expecting the kind of consistent quality, depth or replay value that you'll find in *Rogue Leader*.

GERAINT EVANS



### TARGETING

***As we said in the review, the targeting mechanism does help alleviate some of the stress from trying to draw a bead on the masses of enemies you're faced with, but unfortunately it also ends up being a focal point of your play – resulting in a game that has one of the most important skill aspects taken out of your hands. Disappointing.***



- Good solid blaster.
- Some genuinely exhilarating sections.
- Very challenging.



- Inconsistent and dull in places.
- Can be confusing.
- Weak multiplayer.



**IF YOU LIKE THIS…**
**Rogue Leader**
**LucasArts**
**NGC/68 87%**
**As close as you can get to being a proper Rebel pilot. Lovely.**



**8 VISUALS**
Very impressive in places with a (mostly) smooth frame-rate.

**6 SOUNDS**
Great music, but the FX and speech can be very annoying at times.

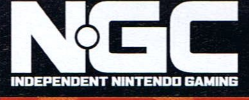


**8 MASTERY**
Big environments, huge ships and loads and loads of activity.

**7 LIFESPAN**
Challenging, but once you're done there's little incentive to return.



**VERDICT**
**Brilliant in some places, just plain dull in most of the others. Worth a look for hardcore Star Wars fans, though.**







**WHY, ROBOT?** R2-D2 stands for Reel 2, Dialogue 2 a section of film that went missing when American Graffiti was being edited. Being the schmaltzy beard-wearer that he is, Lucas gave the name to the roving dustbin in Star Wars.


It's the Scoob. You can tell by the gormless face. All snacked up and nowhere (interesting) to go…




**DEVELOPER** PIPEWORKS
**PUBLISHER** THQ
**PLAYERS** 1-4
**MEMORY CARD PAGES** 3
**OUT** NOW
**COST** £30



# SCOOBY DOO! NIGHT OF 100 FRIGHTS

## Can't… stop…falling… asleep… zzzzzzzzz.

Yeah, we know you were all as eager to get your hands on this as we were – and we're really gutted to have to break this devastating news to you all – but you're just going to have to face facts. *Scooby Doo* isn't very good.

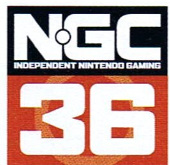
We're sorry, we really are. Everyone on the **NGC** team was looking forward to exploring the 'creepy' mansion as much as you guys. Just like you, we used to cheer each other up from day to day, by imagining the hilarious hi-jinx and thigh-slapping visual gags that awaited us around every corner of The Scoob's adventure.

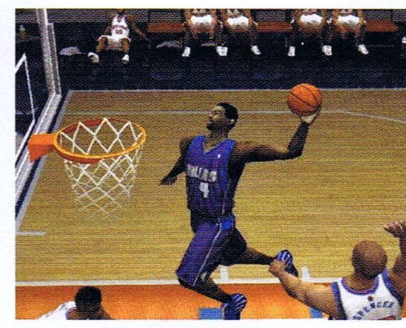
We thrilled at the idea of both 'running' and 'jumping' on 'platforms' and collecting 'Scooby Snacks', and dribbled quietly at the prospect of finding 'crazy' inventions to open up the game, but then when all it finally arrived, we discovered the awful, terrible truth.

This 'platforming' business had already been done better a hundred times over in about a hundred different ways. Apparently, there are some that will hold your interest for more than a few of days, while being what some people call 'enjoyable'.

Upsetting we know, but that's just how things are.


Pits crumble under your feet with no warning. Fair?





Using the C-stick for fancy moves gets you into positions to score with relative ease.

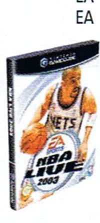

Blocking and stealing is a touch easier than in *Courtside*, making games more competitive.


There's no denying that the close-up action of the replays can look very impressive.

# NBA LIVE 2003




**DEVELOPER** EA
**PUBLISHER** EA
**PLAYERS** 1-4
**MEMORY CARD PAGES** 12
**OUT** NOW
**COST** £40



## Surprise surprise. It's another EA Sports update…



You pretty much know exactly where you stand with EA's yearly updates. It's usually a case of same-game-with-a-few-tweaks-here-and-there, and *NBA Live 2003* isn't going to start breaking that rule.

You've got your usual Exhibition, Franchise, Season and Playoff modes to work through, as well as a Team Management mode that allows you to trade and sell players and create your own stars. EA have also included a comprehensive stat mode so that you can 'dazzle' your mates with pages and pages of numbers – most of which won't mean a damn thing to anyone but the most hardened basketball fanatic.

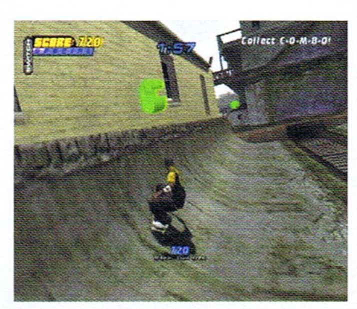
This is essentially the point when it comes to these kinds of games, though. You'll already know whether you want to buy it or not – if you're a fan of the sport in question, there'll be plenty to keep you occupied. The action itself is perfectly enjoyable (although not quite as good as *Courtside*), the players are well animated and dynamic enough for you to uncover new moves and tactics over the months that you'll be playing, and of course, between you and like-minded mates, this will continue to run and run – at least until next year's update hits the shelves.



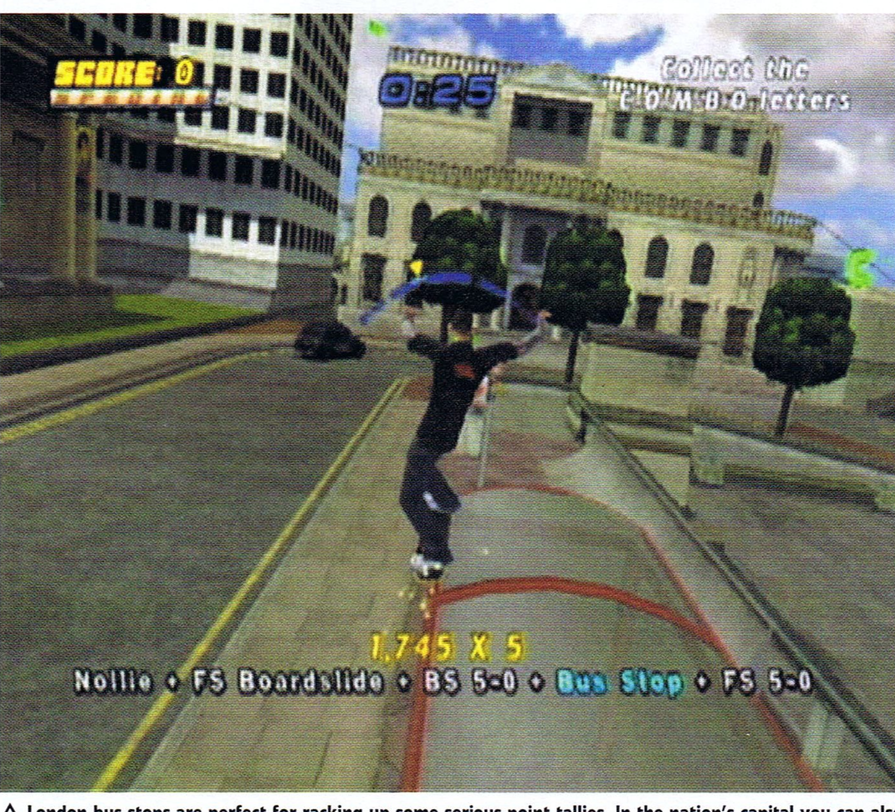
"All the time limits have been ripped out of the game"



△ Help protesters free heffalumps from their cages with your boarding talents.



△ The C-O-M-B-O letters must be collected in one swift, well... combo.




△ London bus stops are perfect for racking up some serious point tallies. In the nation's capital you can also disrupt picket lines and harass the local constabulary by knocking off their helmets. Do try this at home.



△ The balance meter returns – you must use the analogue stick to stay on your feet and score higher.




△ Variety is important – to get the pro scores it's vital that you flip in and out of different moves.



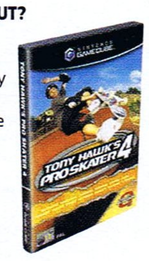
# TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

**The oldest skater in the world** puts his name to yet another extreme sports title. But is it rad, bad, or just sad?

## INFO BURST

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER | NEVERSOFT |
| PUBLISHER | ACTIVISION |
| PLAYERS | 1 |
| MEMORY CARD PAGES | 7 |
| GBA LINK-UP | NO |
| SURROUND SOUND | YES |
| WIDESCREEN | NO |

**WHEN'S IT OUT?**
By the time you read this it'll be in every good games emporium the world over.



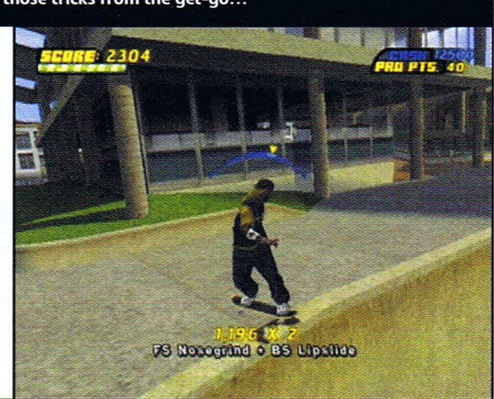

**COST: £40**

## GET INTO THE GAME

Newbie or skilled? Flip those tricks from the get-go...

### THE COLLEGE YEARS

*The first level – the college – eases you into the game with 16 challenges, most of which are pretty simple. It's the perfect proving ground for your skills and acts as a gentle introduction for newbies. Of course, you don't have to do any of the tasks – if you want you can just pootle around the level, break a few windows, or 'skitch' onto the back of vehicles (if you don't know what skitching is, then go and watch 17-year-old time travel classic Back to the Future).*



# TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

The grand old man of board skating gets ready for a foursome…



### WALL GRIND

*Press the Y-button to briefly perform a wall grind. In London one of your challenges is to tag five buses – a piece of cake for even novice skaters. It's highly amusing, but probably not very good for the tourist trade.*

### SPECIAL

*Combine enough tricks together and the Special meter will fill up. Once it hits its peak, you'll be able to pull off extra-special moves, such as the misty, to get the really high scores.*

### CASH

*You'll find cash littered around the place. Collect enough green stuff, and you can unlock goodies such as boards and extra skaters.*

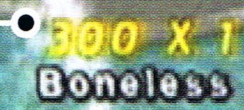
### CHATTERBOX

*Spot anyone with a blue arrow above their head and you can go over for a brief chat. Some of the challenges will not only gain you a skate point, but will act as mini-tutorials. In London, you'll learn how to 'pogo' on your board…*

### COMBO METER

*All the tricks you've performed in one smooth combo will be displayed at the foot of the screen. If you pull off a particularly flash manoeuvre you can catch it in full on an instant replay.*






## GRIND ME

***The quickest way to getting a super-high score is to grind in and out of tricks in one smooth combo. Simply jump onto a lip or rail by pressing Y, make the transition to another lip by pressing A, and repeat until you're maxed out on points.***













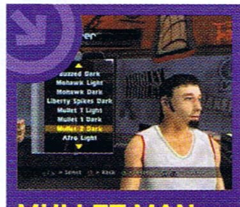
There's a danger that the *Tony Hawk's* franchise is going the way of the Police Academy movies. Remember those? At least Activision hasn't bothered with the stupid subtitles. Can you imagine that? *Tony Hawk's 4: Assignment Trafalgar Square.* So it was with a certain amount of apathy that we greeted yet another one. But get this – *Tony Hawk's 4* is actually really good. No, not just good because it delivers the same game engine, tricks and skaters we loved in *Tony Hawk's 3* – it's good because Neversoft has made a big, big effort to innovate.

The first thing you'll notice is that the time limits have been ripped out of the game. A positive step forwards in our opinion. Apart from exams and quiz shows hosted by Bruce Forsyth, time limits are a tiny part of everyday life, but in *Tony Hawk's* games they're obligatory. In short, they are artificial structures that game designers seem hell-bent on imposing on us. In *Tony Hawk's 4*, however, you get to skate around the locations for as long as you like, taking in the scenery and discovering the best areas in which to link tricks together for those massive combo strings.

### ROLL PLAYING

And this is where the novel RPG element of *THPS4* comes in. Instead of performing one task after another you can now take on the different challenges in any order you like. All you have to do is skate up to a designated person (they will have large blue arrows above their heads, just in case you don't notice them), and press the X-button to receive a challenge. And this is where the fourth *Tony Hawk's* game improves upon its predecessors, because the challenges are much more varied and interesting than they ever have been before.

Okay, so you still have to collect the S-K-A-T-E letters, reach pro-score totals, and enter mini-tournaments. But the developers clearly had some crazy caffeine-fuelled brainstorming sessions to come up with the game's more eccentric tasks. Helping a convict escape from Alcatraz Island, feeding the seals at San Francisco's harbour, and collecting the pink elephant hallucinations of a booze-addled wino are just a few of the more zany challenges. Of course, once you accept a task then the obligatory time limit does come into play,



### MULLET MAN

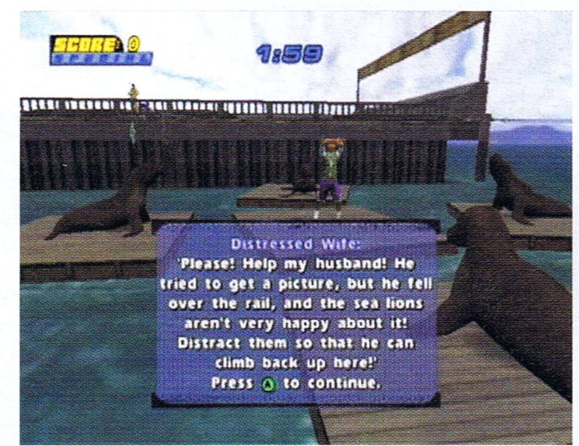
***You may be thin, lanky and spotty, but not everyone is so lucky. Those who don't have the physical characteristics to fit in with the local skate crew will be pleased to hear that Tony Hawk's 4 lets you design you own digital boarder. The options are extensive. Our redneck cut a sartorial swathe across San Francisco's bay area, we can tell you.***

**CRATEBOARDING!** The skateboard was invented in the early 1900s by scamps and urchins, who would attach roller skates to bits of wood, and ride around in gangs, drinking sugar water and listening to garage bebop.

"It's a bit long in the tooth, but the old magic is still there"

# A SKATE TO VICTORY

A couple of the more ingenious challenges that *Tony Hawk's 4* throws at you…




### TOURIST TROUBLE

*Some dumb American tourist is being harassed by seals, of all things. You need to distract the braying sea-creatures in some way, so he can escape their blubbery advances.*



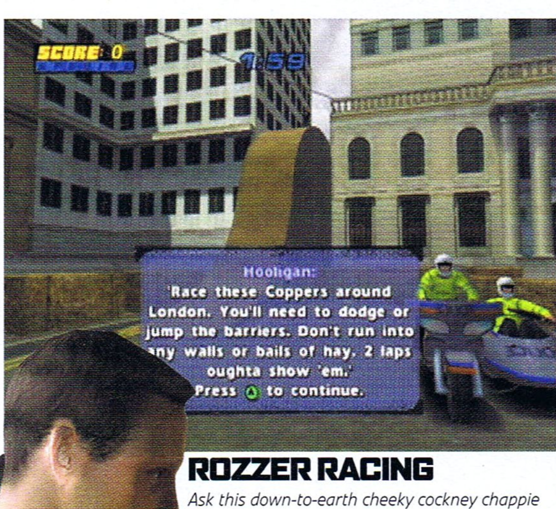

### TACKLE THE FISHERMEN

*Act like a local and go hunting for some fishermen's tackle. Once you discover the boxes, ollie onto one of them to persuade its owner to move away from his pitch.*




### FREE THE FISH

*Grind along the rail and the fisherman's catch will plummet into the water. Do this four times and the dumb American tourist will then be freed from his terrifying seal-based predicament. Hurrah!*




### ROZZER RACING

*Ask this down-to-earth cheeky cockney chappie for a challenge and he'll call in the cops to give you a race around Trafalgar Square.*




### COP SOME SPEED

*You'll have to sit on your board for extra speed, but try not to get too close to the peelers' sidecar, or you might just get treated to some police brutality, London-style…*




### LAP THE LAW

*The best strategy is to stay behind the police motorcycle until the very last lap, then avoid all the barriers and overtake the gentlemen of Her Majesty's Constabulary on the final corner.*




△ **Unfortunately, *Tony Hawk's 4* is starting to look a little dated.**

but at least you never feel completely stressed out by the tick-tick-tick of a clock as you cruise around the levels.

In fact, *Tony Hawk's 4* offers the perfect environment for beginners. Although it eventually gets rock-hard once you come to the later levels, the learning curve is very gentle early on. Each of the challenges acts as a mini-tutorial, guiding you on the principles of anything from flip tricks to manuals. The structure is more open than before, and as you collect skate points for completing tasks to unlock later locations. This means you can turn down any challenge that you're finding too hard or just plain frustrating. And yes, there are some frustrating moments in the game, and some challenges will have you going into the restart menu over and over again.

> **"FROM THE TRADITIONAL OPENING COLLEGE AREA, TO TRAFALGAR SQUARE, THE AREAS ARE ABOUT FIVE TIMES BIGGER THAN THPS3'S"**

### PERSONAL SPACE

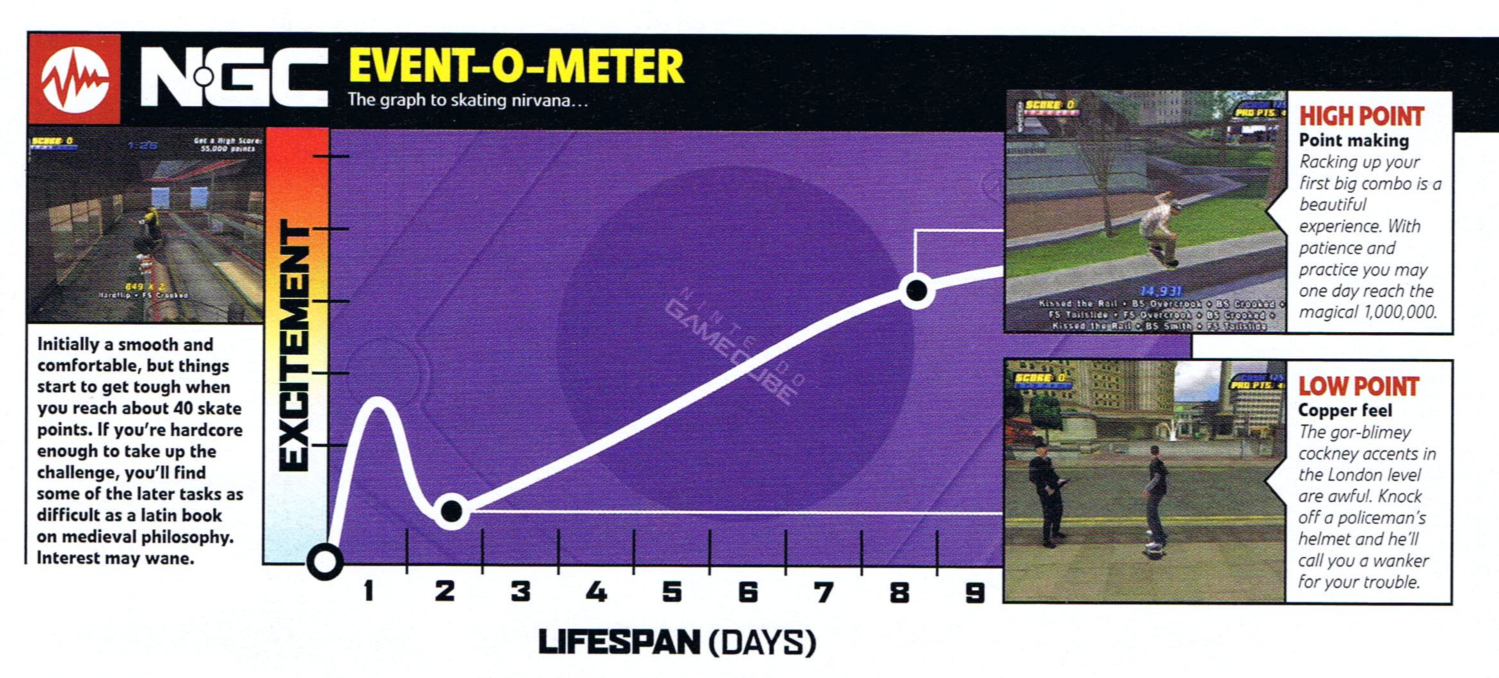
The areas are much more expansive too. From the traditional opening college area to



**MOVIE TONE!** Tony Hawk has appeared in more than 20 movies – usually as himself, but noted 'acting' roles have included 'Buddy' in 1989's Skate or Die, and 'Skateboarder' in Police Academy 4: Citizens on Patrol. Impressive…

# TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

The grand old man of board skating gets ready for a foursome…







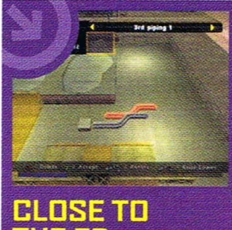


△ The dockyard is one of the weaker areas because there are fewer places to string combos together.

Trafalgar Square, the locations are about five times bigger than any of those found in *Tony Hawk's 3*. Simply exploring the locations is a joy and there are plenty of secret sections and bonuses to be found for those willing to try the unexpected. One minor gripe, however, is that expansion doesn't necessarily equate with tight design. Some of the areas feel a little clumsy and don't present enough architectural transitions to allow you to rack up the really massive trick combos.

Hawk fans will be delighted to hear that the trick system is just as accomplished as it's always been. Indeed, you will find a few surprises thrown in, such as the Pogo move, to try out. The franchise may be getting a bit long in the tooth now, but the old magic is still there. Indeed, there are few games that deliver the thrill of racking up a 500,000-point combo. When it happens, it's pure unadulterated ecstasy.

There's also tremendous fun to be had in designing your own skater and putting him into a skate park that you've created yourself. Though you won't be able to design areas anywhere near as elaborate as those in the actual game, it's a welcome addition to the package. The only real criticism we'd throw is that it's starting to get a little bit dated in the visuals department. There's also the occasional touch of slow-down, but certainly nothing to spoil your overall enjoyment of the game.



**CLOSE TO THE ED**

***The Skate Park Editor returns, only this time there are even more bits and pieces. The ground can be raised and lowered, so you can really go to town creating a space that's challenging or just plain ridiculous. You can have loads of fun just building a park from pipes lining and intersecting the ground.***

## BOARD TO BE WILD

It's really in the variety of experience where *Tony Hawk's 4* wins our applause. There are plenty of minigames, such as the luge-style runs, and even a baseball game which lets you smack balls into the sky with your trusty board. Altogether there are some 190 challenges to complete. Don't just gloss over that fact, read it out loud – 190. When you consider that it takes about ten hours to complete the first – and, therefore, easiest – 50 challenge points, then you get some idea of the depth on offer here.

Cynics will say that *Tony Hawk's 4* is just an update, but once you start playing there's no denying that it's just as furiously addictive as ever. But where does the franchise go next? Now we just await *Tony Hawk's 5: The Online RPG*. The one where you get to choose your style of Offspring T-shirt and can share a virtual can of cider outside your local digital McDonald's with your skate crew buddies. Surely that's got to be the way forward for Neversoft…

MARK WALBANK



- Magical controls and combo system.
- Open-ended structure.
- Very addictive.



- Starting to get dated in the visual department.
- Repetitive nature of the game may put you off.



**IF YOU LIKE THIS…**

**Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3**
Activision
NGC/64 93%
Smaller, tighter levels than this version.



**7 VISUALS**
More an out-of-fashion geek than a next-generation stud.



**8 SOUNDS**
An eclectic mixture of cool hip-hop and not-cool nu-metal.



**8 MASTERY**
Gentle at the start, rock-hard at the end. Even fans will find it tough.

**9 LIFESPAN**
If you have the patience to stick at it, *TH4* will take you days and days.

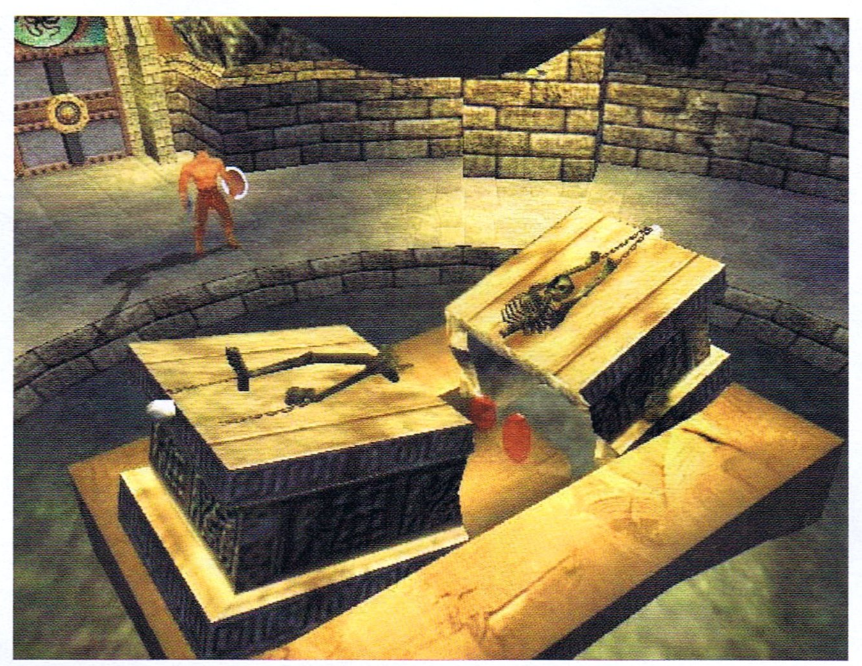
**VERDICT**

**Neversoft have done a great job in keeping the formula fresh, but there's still a feeling of déjà vu. Fans will find it as addictive as ever.**






"You beat up enemies, using combinations of tedious moves"



△ While it looks moderately accomplished in places, the action itself is far from polished.

# THE SCORPION KING



INFO BURST

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER | POINT OF VIEW |
| PUBLISHER | UNIVERSAL |
| PLAYERS | 1 |
| MEMORY CARD PAGES | 2 |
| OUT | NOW |
| COST | £40 |



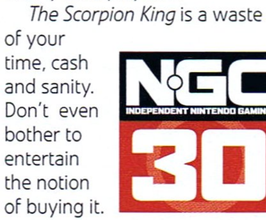
## Greased-up camel-baiting simulation, circa 890BC…

We despair. We really do. There are games that were never meant to be, born screaming into a harsh world, that you take one look at, play with for five minutes, before weeping quietly to yourself. There's simply no need for this game to exist other than to bring a tidal wave of depression over anyone unfortunate enough to have paid for it.

It's so hard to pick out any of *Scorpion King*'s redeeming features, if indeed they are actually there. Basically, it's a slapdash roaming beat-'em-up, hurriedly released to tie in with the film of the same name. You're in a location. You beat up any enemies you see, using combinations of tedious moves before moving on to the next area to repeat the punching, kicking and running process. Again and again, inane, pointless action conspires to lull you into a dribbling, semi-vegetative state. What fun!

This was never a good idea. Just because somebody makes a rubbish film doesn't mean somebody else has to make a rubbish game to go with it. Even if you're The Rock's biggest fan, you'd be hard pushed to derive any shred of enjoyment from this game, other than by punching the many camels you meet on your journey in the head to see if you can floor them with one blow. But even that never works. It provides *some* amusement for about a minute or so – exactly the length of time you'll want to keep this game after you're played it.

*The Scorpion King* is a waste of your time, cash and sanity. Don't even bother to entertain the notion of buying it.



NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING 30

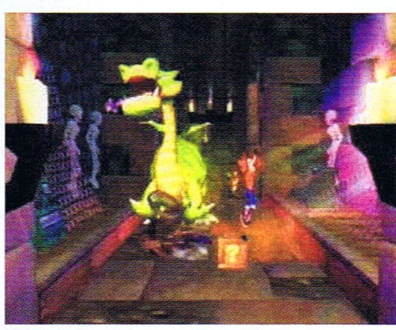




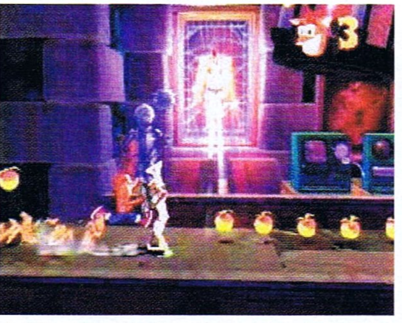
△ Punch, move, punch, kick, move, hurt camel… you know the drill.



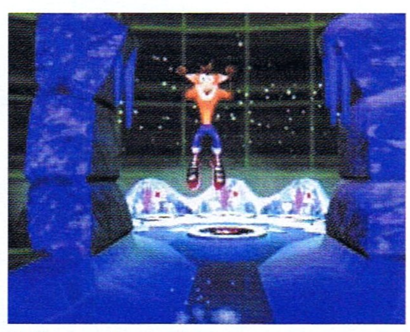
△ A 'funny' visual 'gag'. By 'gag' we mean 'irritation' and by 'funny' we mean 'non-funny'.



△ Run Crash, run! The chase is on once again as the bandicoot battles against the rancid camera.



△ Collect them fruity pick-ups! Only 97 more to go and that fourth life is yours! Yawn.



△ The game's central hub. If you can muster the energy, step on the pads to access a level.

# CRASH BANDICOOT THE WRATH OF CORTEX

INFO BURST

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER | EUROCOM |
| PUBLISHER | UNIVERSAL |
| PLAYERS | 1 |
| MEMORY CARD PAGES | 3 |
| OUT | NOW |
| COST | £30 |



## Irritating orange weasel in awful platformer shocker…



Sonic we will always welcome with open arms. Hell, we'll even put up with that legless gumbo Rayman if it comes to it. But Crash Bandicoot we draw the line at – especially if he turns up on our doorstep in this kind of shape.

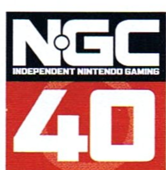
Visually, *The Wrath of Cortex* does nothing that couldn't have been done better three years ago. It's jaggy, and the animation on Crash himself is so bad it's beyond comprehension. The frame-rate is appalling considering how little the game's actually doing, and the camera (in a game that's on rails) lags behind you at every turn. It's so unimpressive and so devoid of anything remotely interesting that it's nigh impossible to take at all seriously.

Nothing has changed – *Cortex* feels exactly the same as all the other *Crash*es ever did. You have your run-into-the-screen bits and your minigame-style flying bits to help break up the action. There's still the same old crate-smashing and fruit-collecting, and Crash still dies if he so much as grazes past any of the moronic enemies that wander the levels. Brilliant.

> "CRASH STILL DIES IF HE SO MUCH AS GRAZES ANY OF THE MORONIC ENEMIES"

In light of *Mario Sunshine*'s excellence, this just looks tired – if truth be known, it isn't even as good as the painfully average *Taz Wanted* that we reviewed back in issue 72. It's technically poor, and the game itself offers nothing that's particularly entertaining or inspiring.

As Kittsy put it, "If platformers were music, this one would be Cotton-Eyed Joe." Make of that what you will, but he wasn't smiling when he said it.

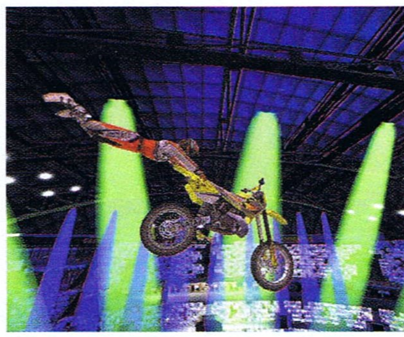


NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING 40


The stadiums are good and big, but the frame-rate sucks and the controls are so basic it's hard to take the game seriously.



So far from the excellence of *Excitebike*, it's…


…tragic. Can no-one make a good MX game?


Collide with someone in mid-air and watch in horror as they bounce off you as though their bikes were made of rubber. Nice work, Paradigm.


While it might look alright enough from up here, the physics on the bikes is so ridiculous you'll have trouble seeing anything through your tears of non-stop laughter. What a load of old dreck.

# BIG AIR FREESTYLE

**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER | PARADIGM |
| PUBLISHER | INFOGRAMES |
| PLAYERS | 1-2 |
| MEMORY CARD PAGES | 3 |
| SURROUND SOUND | NO |
| WIDESCREEN | NO |

**WHEN'S IT OUT?**
Got money to burn? *Big Air Freestyle* is out now on both PAL and NTSC. Excited? You really, really shouldn't be…




**COST: £40**

## **Slip on your leathers** and get ready to lose your sanity. It's yet another pathetic *Excitebike* wannabe…

Is this some kind of joke? If it is, we're not laughing (and if we were, it would be for all the wrong reasons). One part *Jeremy McGrath Supercross World*, and one part *My First Extreme Sports Game*, this is yet another MX title that need never have existed.

From the angry, highly irritating music that runs throughout the entire game, to the shoddy visuals there's very little (save for the fact that the game actually seems to work properly) that you can call entertaining. Let's take your first race as a typical example of the experience you should expect. After the first five seconds of entering in-game territory, you'll realise you've just wasted a money on a real stinker. There are jaggies everywhere. The frame-rate, considering the fact that the game isn't actually doing much, is nothing short of appalling. If that wasn't bad enough, the handling of the bikes is about as subtle as a road accident. As is the fashion these days, the things seem to drift over the ground as though they were a couple of millimetres above the mud. Turning your bike is simply a matter of wanging the analogue left and right like a demented five-year-old, and the stunts – oh lordy, the *stunts* – well, they really are something else…

> **"FROM THE ANGRY, IRRITATING MUSIC TO THE SHODDY VISUALS, THERE'S VERY LITTLE ENTERTAINMENT HERE"**

Imagine, if you will, commandeering a hefty pig (wearing a helmet if you like – the pig, not you), and skewering it on a rotating barbecue spike. Now transport it to a low-gravity environment (the moon, perhaps) and lob it towards the vacuum of space. Don't forget, at the second of launch, to give your pig a little spin left or right before it leaves your hands. *Big Air*'s tricks work like this, in a decidedly similar, low-gravity, low budget, porcine fashion. If you stop laughing by the time your rider bangs his head on the ground, you won't have enough energy to try again. Thing is, chances are you won't want to anyway.

GERAINT EVANS


- It works.
- Er…
- That's it.


- Shoddy presentation.
- Shoddy handling.
- Shoddy stunts.
- Showaddywaddy.

**IF YOU LIKE THIS…**
**Jeremy McGrath's Supercross World**
Acclaim
NGC/69 20%
If you liked this, try this crippled donkey.



**4 VISUALS**
Stills might look okay, but in motion it'll make you cry.

**3 SOUNDS**
Grrrr! GraaAAAAH! Gnnnaar! GRRrRrR! Rubbish.

**3 MASTERY**
Yeah, right.

**4 LIFESPAN**
Plenty of it, but you can say the same about guano in Blackpool.

**VERDICT**
**Not quite the worst MX game, but as close as anyone's dared to get. A total waste of time and money – theirs and yours.**




**28**

"*Frontline* benefits from a staggering attention to detail"



### VEHICLES
*Although you can't drive them yourself, there are plenty of vehicles in the game, from tanks to planes to even more. Remember to roll grenades underneath those tanks…*

### ENVIRONMENTS
*There are plenty of unique battlegrounds. As you progress through the game, you'll be taken to many different areas – the blasted, bloody beaches eventually give way to unspoiled countryside, for example.*



### STATISTICS
*Both your health and your compass is represented here – helpful in many ways, not in the least telling you where to go next, as it's sometimes easy to get a little lost. Ruined towns can be confusing places, you know.*

### THE BAD GUYS
*Well, the Nazis were the bad guys in real life, so they're the bad guys in the game, too. You've got to steal a very valuable item from them, and this mission directive forms the basis for the whole game.*



### INFO BURST

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER | EA |
| PUBLISHER | EA |
| PLAYERS | 1-4 |
| MEMORY CARD PAGES | 2 |
| GBA LINK-UP | NO |
| SURROUND SOUND | NO |
| WIDESCREEN | NO |

**WHEN'S IT OUT?**
*Medal of Honor: Frontline* should be in the shops to buy now.



**COST: £40**



# MEDAL OF HONOR FRONTLINE

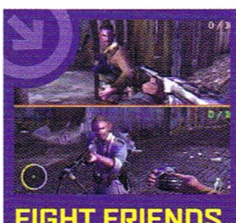
## **Once more unto the breach!** Save the free world and shoot your friends in this WWII conversion.



Sony fans and PC owners have long crowed about the *Medal of Honor* games – and with good reason. As evocations of another time and place, they're magnificent – drenched in atmosphere and indulging our enduring fascination with World War II. And *Frontline* is perhaps the best of them.

It's instantly appealing – provided, of course, you don't question the morality of transporting the perils of such a time to a game. And now Gamecube owners get a chance to see what all the fuss is about, with this port of the PlayStation 2 *Medal of Honor: Frontline* – which has turned out to be more than a simple photocopy, as the on/off multiplayer mode finally makes a definite appearance.

### HONOURABLE MENTIONS
However, as good as it is that a game like this has made the move to the Cube, a little reality-check is in order. Perhaps we've been spoiled with the subtlety and complexities of *GoldenEye*, *Perfect Dark* and *Timesplitters 2*, but this isn't quite the classic game that it was touted as on PS2. *Medal of Honor* benefits from a staggering attention to detail and delicious period trappings, so much so that it immerses the player to an extent that something like *Turok Evolution* could never achieve. But this (admittedly wonderful) scene-setting hides a deceptively simple game. There's nothing being done here that hasn't been done before; the game revolves around standard first-person shooter mechanics and there are no dual-function weapons, bird's-eye-view missiles, or infra-red gadgets to modernise the experience. You've played it all before – but it's the window dressing that makes *Frontline* so irresistible.



### FIGHT FRIENDS
***As we've said, the mutliplayer component of** Frontline **is a welcome addition, although sadly not an essential one. However, being able to creep around ruined towns is tense and atmospheric, and there's a real variety of maps. The period weaponry is fun, too .***

### WAR STORIES
It's extremely well scripted; real footage bookends the levels, and actual veteran Captain Dale Die chips in to lend an air of gravitas. And despite this iteration being slightly polished over the source code, it's a testament to how good the game looked on

# MEDAL OF HONOR

No, that's Honour with a 'U'



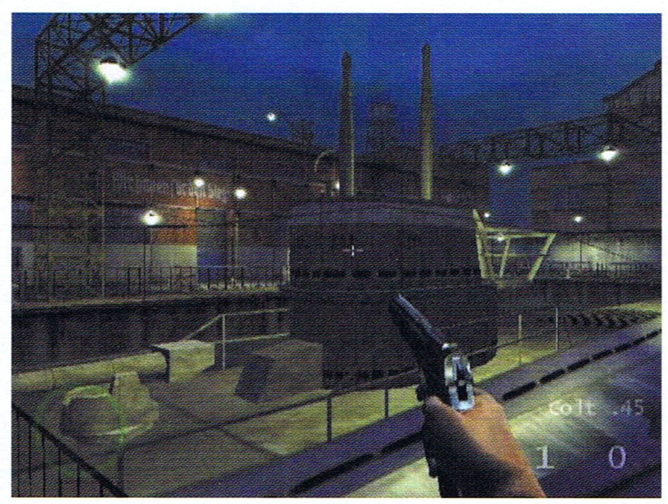
Four of them, one of you. Not good odds. Unless you're Lieutenant Jimmy Patterson.



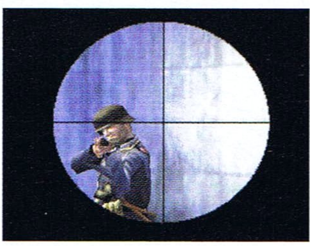
It's not all rifles – hence this huge great rocket launcher. A slight case of overkill, eh?



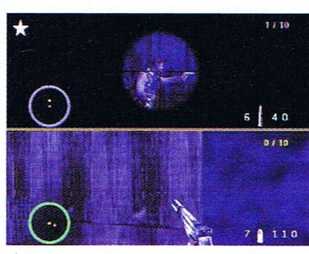
France. A lovely place to visit, unless it's been bombed to smithereens by the dastardly Hun. Here, you've got dispose of this tank – rolling a grenade underneath works best.



One of the missions sees you infiltrating this Nazi submarine port.



Sniping is always good fun.



The multiplayer is… average.



- Magnificently atmospheric.
- Well structured.
- Multiplayer mode.



- The opening scene is the best.
- Gets repetitive.
- Ultimately basic.

**IF YOU LIKE THIS…**

**Timesplitters 2**
Eidos
NGC/73, 92%
The best FPS on the Cube. Complete and hugely customisable.



**7 VISUALS**
Utterly wonderful in places but murky and dreary in others.



**7 SOUNDS**
The horrifying sound and fury of war, and tons of speech.



**6 MASTERY**
Chugs a bit here and there, but is mostly satisfyingly capable.

**7 LIFESPAN**
Can get repetitive and samey, but now with new multiplayer.

**VERDICT**
A welcome – and improved – conversion of the PS2 original, but not without its own faults. Still plenty of fun, though.




## JOIN THE ARMY SEE THE WORLD

*Frontline* takes you to some pretty diverse places…



### BEACHES

*The first level, as you've probably heard, is the brilliant storming of Omaha Beach. Just like the start of Saving Private Ryan, it is – horrible, but great. Sadly downhill from here.*



### TOWNS

*The Nazi occupation has left plenty of ruined towns. Here you've got to make your own fraught way through just such a blitzed place, as planes fly overhead and tanks rumble.*



### COUNTRYSIDE

*Help a fellow soldier-man grenade enemy tanks and spy paratroopers in trees – or, as is the case here, windmills. You'll come across delightful rural villages on the way, too.*



### INSTALLATIONS

*You'll be asked to infiltrate key enemy areas, such as this submarine yard/port. You'll also board enemy vehicles, in sequences reminiscent of GoldenEye's Train level.*

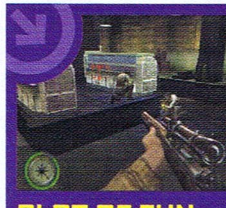
PS2 that it can still impress here (although it is occasionally muddy and murky). The opening level – storming Omaha Beach – is of course breathtaking, but the French countryside is equally well rendered, and the shattered townscapes and rubble-strewn streets are brutally gorgeous.

It's one of those rare single-player games that can hold the interest of onlookers as you play. But it's not all good. The opening level – owing a giant debt to Saving Private Ryan – serves as the game's high point (it's terrifying and thrilling in equal measure), but it's downhill from there as the missions get more ordinary and more derivative, and the action more repetitive. And the multiplayer game, while perfectly adequate, and of interest due to the WWII environment and period weaponry, never really excites. But it's a good thing to have, all the same, and it speaks volumes that EA took the time to implement it here.

**"IT'S STEEPED IN ATMOSPHERE AND TRADITION, AND SUCCESSFUL IN ITS PRESENTATION OF ANOTHER TIME"**

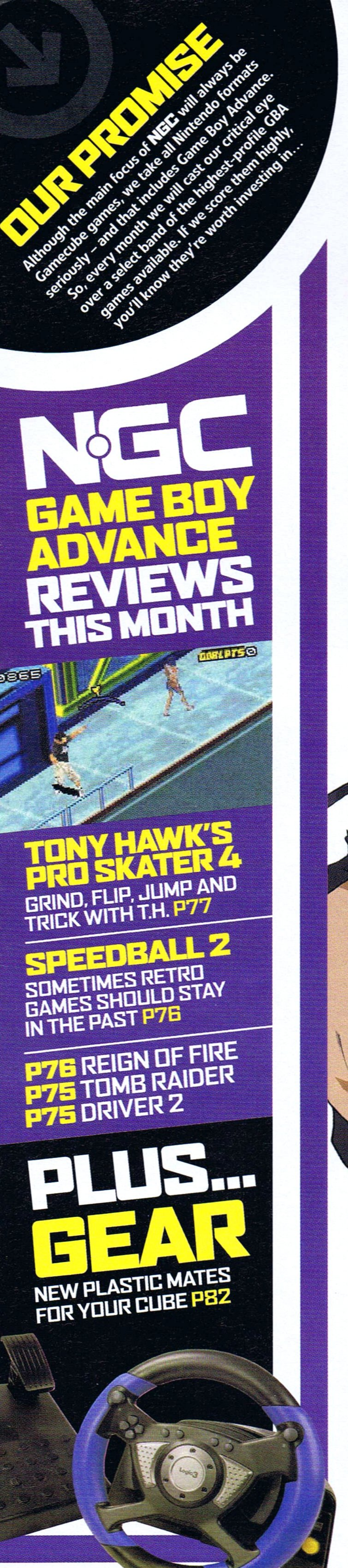
If you can tear yourself away from *Timesplitters 2*, you'll find an absorbing shooter here, one that's steeped in atmosphere and tradition and successful in its presentation of another place and time. However, it's a touch old-fashioned, and while solid, lacks the bells and whistles and sheer invention that would make it truly great. Up against *Nightfire* it fares well indeed, because as steeped in set-pieces and move mayhem as that game is, there's more substance here, and a degree of cohesion and structure that Bond's latest lacks. Good fun, then – but not quite a classic.

JES BICKHAM



**PLOT OF FUN**

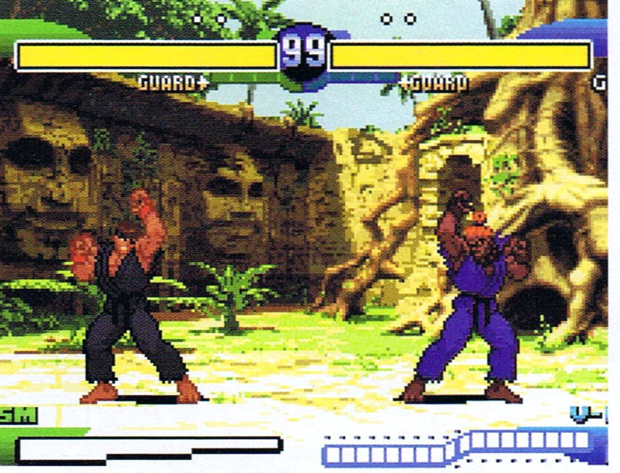
*As Lieutenant Jimmy Patterson, you're taking part in Operation Market Garden – which means you're trying to steal the HO-IX jet plane from the Nazis, and thus end any development that might swing the war in Adolf's favour. Actual newsreel footage helps propel the story along.*





△ Supers are the way to finish.


△ Two-on-one battles: dramatic.


△ Crawfish have even managed to get the taunts and intros in there.


△ The backgrounds are faithfully represented.


△ Not all the stages have been included.

# STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3

## Near-perfect conversion Capcom heaven on GBA…

NGC STAR GAME



**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| **FORMAT** | GBA |
| **FROM** | CRAWFISH |
| **PLAYERS** | 1-2 |
| **SINGLE-CART** | |
| **LINK UP** | NO |
| **SAVE** | ON CART |
| **OUT** | NOW |
| **COST** | £30 |

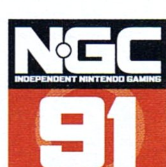
Just how Crawfish managed to stuff the whole of *SFA3* into the GBA's tiny cart is anyone's guess, but not only have they done it, they've done it in style.

The most impressive thing is just how close a port this is. True, the resolution has been lowered, but on the GBA's tiny screen it's barely noticable. Hardly any frames of animation seem to have been lost, with the only major concessions being the loss of some of the backgrounds, character endings and the intro, all of which have no bearing on the way the game plays. Naturally, much of the sound has also been removed, particularly the announcer (who was irritating anyway), but most of the important speech samples remain.

The most important thing of all, however, is the way it plays, and Crawfish have managed to translate the experience to the small screen brilliantly. Unlike in Capcom's previous GBA effort, light, medium and hard attacks are now far easier to access, with one button being assigned to hard and light, while pressing both punch and kick buttons together delivers a medium attack – which makes comboing far more practical. To accommodate the GBA's tiny D-pad, super specials can now be pulled off with a quarter-rotation followed by button presses – removing the frustration of linking them into combos and makes everything more fluid to play.

> **"CRAWFISH HAVE MANAGED TO TRANSLATE THE EXPERIENCE TO THE SMALL SCREEN BRILLIANTLY"**

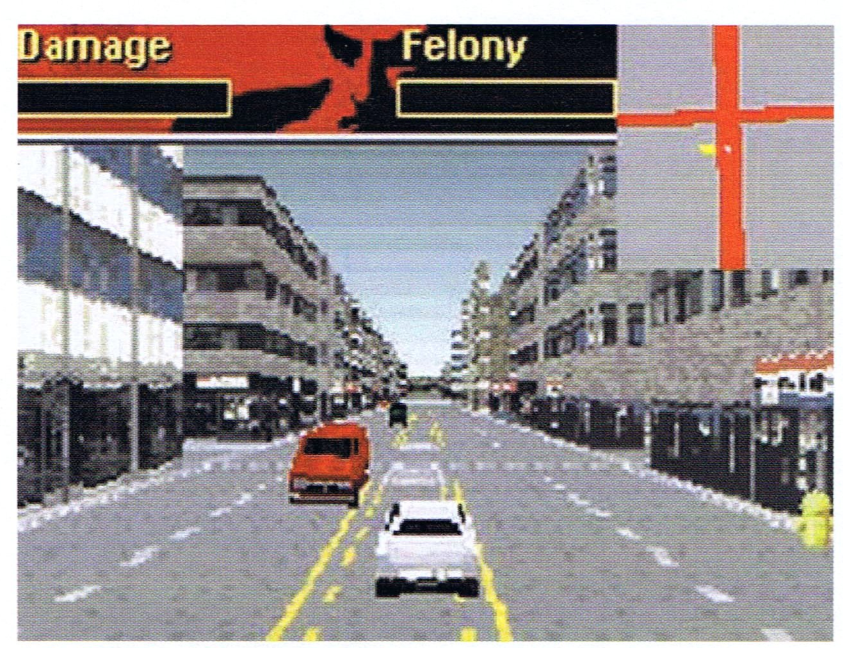
Top all that off with loads of unlockable modes, including the excellent Survival, World Tour, Vs and Training modes, as well as the Dramatic Battle (team up with a CPU character and smash in the opposition). Astounding stuff – as close to holding a DC in the palms of your hands as you're likely to get.




△ Survival has you battling against a never-ending stream of enemies.


△ Different 'isms' alter your moves.


**DID YOU KNOW?** The original *Street Fighter* arcade machine had pressure-sensitive pads that gamers had to thump to get the light, medium, or hard attacks.




△ The GBC version of *Driver* was one of the best games on the system. What happened here?

# DRIVER 2 ADVANCE



**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| FORMAT | GBA |
| FROM | ATARI |
| PLAYERS | 1-4 |
| SINGLE-CART | |
| LINK UP | NO |
| SAVE | PASSWORD |
| OUT | NOW |
| COST | £30 |

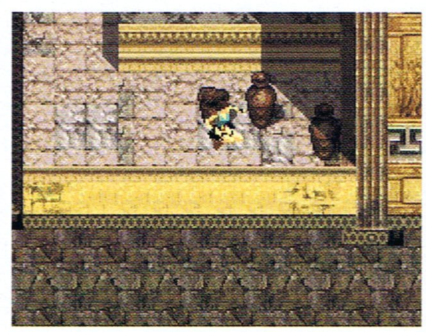
## I like driving in my car. It isn't quite a rally star.

Any game that introduces you to a man called Pink Lenny within the first thirty seconds of play deserves to be given at least some leeway, and things begin fairly well in this gangland-based driving test. Slick and suave cut-scenes set a suitably shady atmosphere as you're tipped off about an out of towner who must be 'dealt with', and so off you go with your shadowy gangster agenda, to administer mafioso justice and drive cars like Steve McQueen in Bullitt.

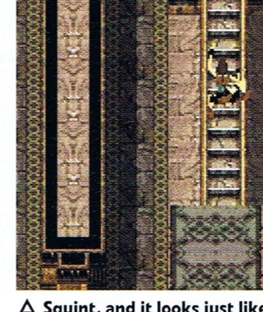
Sadly, the in-game action comes over as distinctly 16-bit, as the 3D graphics engine plainly doesn't work properly. At times it's painful watching block upon block of identical built-up scenery scale endlessly in front of you. Sure, the fact that the cars handle like a blaxploitation movie pimpmobile means that sharp corners and handbrake turns are a cinch, but there's never any real sense of speed.

The game mechanics are really nothing more than following instructions to get to objective A (usually an informant) to receive directions to objective B, and frustration soon sets in as you cruise around at a distinctly pedestrian pace. Occasionally, if you're lucky, there'll be a bit of *Chase HQ*-style ramming of a rogue vehicle off the road, which only serves to make you wonder why no-one's thought of updating the Taito coin-op for GBA yet.

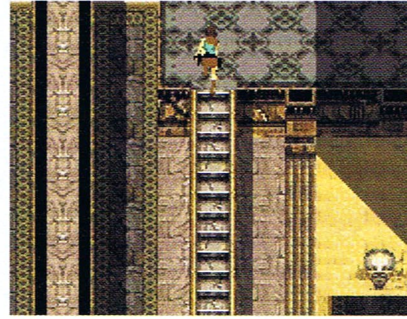


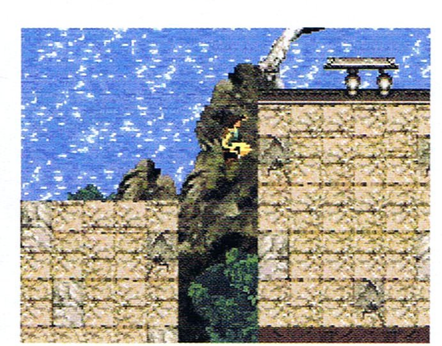
△ She shoots from the hip, does our Lara.



△ Squint, and it looks just like a proper game.



△ Brown trousers never looked so good.



△ Lara Croft: The female Buster Gonad.

# TOMB RAIDER THE PROPHECY



**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| FORMAT | GBA |
| FROM | UBI SOFT |
| PLAYERS | 1 |
| SINGLE-CART | |
| LINK UP | NO |
| SAVE | PASSWORD |
| OUT | NOW |
| COST | £30 |

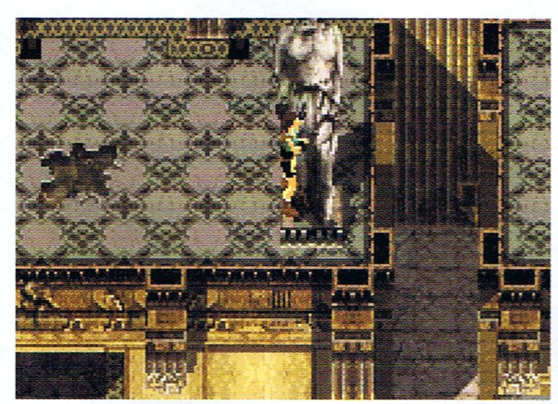
## Shoot bats! Jump diagonally! Lara robs graves on GBA...

Is Lara Croft a symbol of all that is wrong with western gaming? Who knows, but here in this original adventure for GBA the buxom brunette does her best to remind you why the *Tomb Raider* franchise now deserves to be approached with lethargy.

Updating from past Game Boy excursions, Lara moves along in four directions, occasionally making use of ledges that look like background tiles to progress vertically. It's all a bit *Prince of Persia*, but without the slinky animation. Indeed, when climbing up ladders, Lara moves with all the grace of a constipated monkey. And the graphics, once this game's trump card in the early Saturn and PSone days, come over as drab and dull, becoming completely underwhelming as your first encounter with an enemy sees you popping a couple of shots into a giant grey slug. Sorry, giant grey wolf.

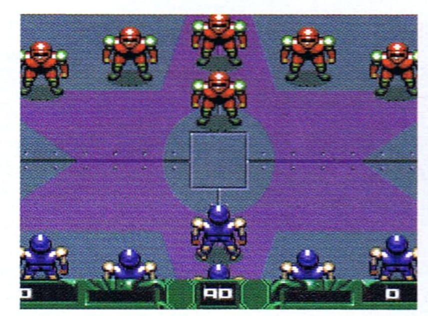
Presentation aside, though, the real problem is that once you strip away all the old Lara hysteria, you're left with the bones of a gaming series that is now suffering from virtual osteoporosis. The pace is singularly and completely void of tension, and there's little compulsion to explore new areas. *Zelda* this is not.

And as for having to press B to pick up items on the floor – why? The great Shigeru Miyamoto would be turning in his grave if he heard about such nonsense. If he was dead, of course.



△ She appeared on the cover of some magazine, once.





△ In the future, people will dress up in stupid costumes and beat the crap out of each other…



△ In that respect it's much like football is today, except the violence is done by the players…



△ If we were in the crowd, we'd be annoyed if the opposition's goals had 2X score bonuses…



△ But that's how it is here, using the awful score multiplier feature. Time to riot, perhaps.

# SPEEDBALL 2

## Classic Rollerball-style mayhem masterpiece on GBA? Kinda…

**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| **FORMAT** | GBA |
| **FROM** | CRAWFISH |
| **PLAYERS** | 1-2 |
| **SINGLE-CART** | |
| **LINK UP** | NO |
| **SAVE** | PASSWORD |
| **OUT** | NOW |
| **COST** | £30 |



Once upon a time, back in the hazy days when computer gaming was still seen as the domain of the spoddy and the friendless (*What do you mean, "seen"? Ed*), a legendary (well, at the time, anyway) programming team called The Bitmap Brothers forged out a reputation as being designers of cool games. In reality, this translated as meaning that they hired 'trendy' musicians to soundtrack their titles (such as Bomb The Bass for *Xenon II* – well, they were moderately well-known in those days) and occasionally wore sunglasses in press shots. Good job they made great games such as *Speedball* and *Chaos Engine* too.

**"TWO TEAMS FACE OFF IN A RUGBY-MEETS-ROLLERBALL HYBRID"**

Unfortunately, this GBA port of perhaps their greatest gaming moment – the futuristic sports sim *Speedball 2*, where two teams face off in a football-meets-rugby-meets-rollerball hybrid, betrays that legacy. Whereas the original version was a frantic play-off between pure arcade skills and tactical foresight, for Nintendo's handheld champion the viewpoint has been zoomed in so much as to make it almost impossible to see where your team-mates are. Which turns the game into little more than an extended exercise in running up the screen avoiding opponents, or dealing with the lottery of passing the metallic ball in the hope that there'll be one of your guys there to catch it at the other end.

It's actually more like the original *Speedball*, but without the claustrophobic environment, and gives the impression that although nostalgia is great at times, the future's usually better.




△ Good old Brutal Deluxe, the default team for player one.








△ Wow, it's just like starring in the movie. Look, there's Christian Bale under that pixel!

# REIGN OF FIRE

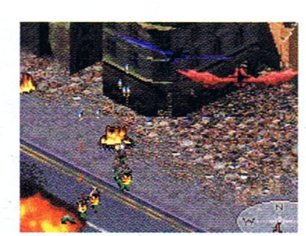
## The movie-based flame-'em-up gets miniaturised…

**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| **FORMAT** | GBA |
| **FROM** | BAM! |
| **PLAYERS** | 1 |
| **SINGLE-CART** | |
| **LINK UP** | NO |
| **SAVE** | PASSWORD |
| **OUT** | NOW |
| **COST** | £30 |



Like dragons? Like the idea of slaying scaly fire-breathing beasts with heavy artillery (as opposed to the traditional swinging-of-swords method)? Like the idea of flipping the entire script and turning helpless humans into toast by playing as a noble flying dragon? Well, Bam! certainly hope you do, as the novel introduction of those medieval monsters is *Reign of Fire*'s main selling point.



△ Fire-pooping dragons. Ace.

**"LIKE THE IDEA OF TURNING HELPLESS HUMANS INTO TOAST?"**

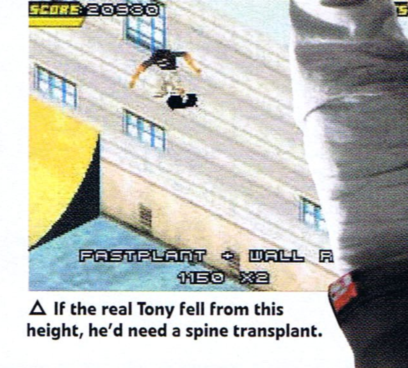
Reminiscent of certain old-school arcade blasters – although it's more *Chaos Engine* than *Gauntlet* in make-up and pace – *Reign of Fire* sees you traversing across 20 moody post-apocalyptic landscapes (dragons have enslaved the world with their fiery tyranny, you see), undertaking primitive tasks along the way such as locating lost team members and securing new bases and vehicles. Controlling the group leader, your men follow dutifully behind, and should they get scorched your party's firepower weakens. And that's about it. You just trundle along, following the red arrow on your compass and taking out an increasingly large variety of dragons (who obviously have none of the polygonal splendour of their Gamecube big brothers).

It's not good. It's not bad. It's just average. But with dragons in it.





△ Spine transfers let you move across the spine of one of these two-sided ramp things.


△ If the real Tony fell from this height, he'd need a spine transplant.



△ Jiggle the balance-o-meter to splondify Tony's board-spontography, thereby scoring points.

# TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| **FORMAT** | GBA |
| **FROM** | ACTIVISION |
| **PLAYERS** | 1-4 |
| **SINGLE-CART** | |
| **LINK UP** | NO |
| **SAVE** | ON CART |
| **OUT** | NOW |
| **COST** | £30 |

## The Hawkster strains his back and straps on his pads for yet another board game. Isn't he due for retirement soon?

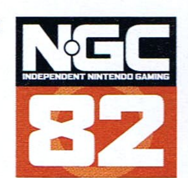

The *Tony Hawk* series of skate games have always felt snugly at home nestled inside a Game Boy Advance. Whether it's the way you can while away your time on forms of public transport flipping ollies, or the legacy of the Atari Lynx's *California Games* painting extreme sports as portable playmates, it just seems to work somehow. And the fourth volume of the ubiquitous Mr Hawk's skate franchise is no different.

The isometric camera is still being put to great use – although sometimes there are a few instances of the old skating-on-thin-air effect – and *THPS4* is the same presentational force as its prior instalments. In fact, it's probably even more fun to play this time around.

Those who were frustrated, bored or underwhelmed with the traditional Tony Hawk mandate of completing set goals to open up new areas to grind in will be delighted with the revamp of the main Career mode. This time there's no imposing clock counting down from the moment you enter an area, so you're free to abuse the public concrete in whatever way you see fit. To progress you'll need to go and accost one of the random stragglers populating the level who'll set you specific goals. For instance, talk to a long blonde-haired dude and you'll be given the option of roaming the level to collect the letters S-K-A-T-E, in two minutes flat. Of course, it's all structured so that certain letters require certain tricks to reach, and – naturally – you can learn those tricks by talking to other people and taking on their tasks. Certainly, it's a much-needed addition to the game's main routine.

**"THERE'S NO IMPOSING CLOCK COUNTING DOWN, SO YOU'RE FREE TO ABUSE THE PUBLIC CONCRETE"**

*THPS4* is slick and smooth, with an intuitive control system that means it's still just as much fun to skate freely around or draw yourself into a hypnotic trance skating back and forth on a half pipe than it is to complete the set goals. In short, it's still top gaming. It's just that for all the new and improved modes and wealth of secrets to uncover, it's not the sublime refinement of progression that *Mario Sunshine* is over *Mario 64*.






△ Nice bit of overcrook there, Hawksy me old son. He even gave it some BS too.



△ Trundle, trundle, sproing, trundle, sproing, flip, splat, trundle, sproing, etc.

**SWEET JESUS!** Tony Hawk is so old that he appeared as 'The Grandad' in a 1981 advert for Werther's Originals, where he wore a false moustache and fed glistening toffees to tousle-haired young scamp Mat Hoffman. True. No, really.

"Nazis get hacked into their component body parts"




**WEAPON SLOTS**
*Rayne can carry four small guns (pistols or SMGs), plus two rifles, two grenades, and one special weapon such as a rocket launcher. Yikes.*

**OBJECTIVES**
*Since these may be hidden behind a wall, miles away, the Aura Vision mode is useful for locating them. They're highlighted as a bright blue glow.*

**RAGE METER**
*Dice enough people and Rayne can enter Blood Rage mode, which allows for superior limb-lopping entertainment.*

**DHAMPIRE**
*Say what? This is the technical term for Rayne's species, since she's the product of a human-vampire 'liaison'.*

# BLOOD RAYNE

## A vampire game that doesn't suck? Meet a lady who could show Blade a thing or two…

**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER | TERMINAL REALITY |
| PUBLISHER | MAJESCO |
| PLAYERS | 1 |
| MEMORY CARD PAGES | 1 |
| GBA LINK-UP | NO |
| SURROUND SOUND | NO |
| WIDESCREEN | NO |

**WHEN'S IT OUT?**
Available now on US import, and over here some time around March.

**COST: £40**

While your friendly neighbourhood goth might think vampires get a rough deal as far as public image goes, *Blood Rayne* presents compelling evidence to the contrary.

Our heroine, a ginger neck-sucker called Rayne, is as blood-crazed as they come. She'll take the occasional victim as a meal to recharge her health, but that's just the odd one in a hundred. The rest of them merely get hacked up into their component body parts, in what's undoubtedly the goriest game we've seen since the PC bullet-fest *Soldier of Fortune*.

The story behind the orgy of violence is pretty good. It's all about 1930s Nazis meddling in the occult and unleashing bad things from the bowels of hell, at which point Rayne steps in to slaughter the ringleaders and clean up the supernatural mess. Indiana Jones never handled it quite like this.

Roaming the brilliantly designed locations can be extremely atmospheric, but only hardcore gorehounds will find much long-term enjoyment in the ceaseless combat. You just pump the shoulder buttons (all the way to the click, annoyingly) and watch as Rayne flips around, blades flashing, never quite connecting with any opponents, until a random dismemberment

**CHOW DOWN**
***Instead of picking up health power-ups from around the levels, Rayne gets her energy topped up by sucking the neck of anything vaguely human. The stronger the victim, the more health they yield, but tough enemies can sometimes repel the grappling hook she uses to reel them close enough to bite. The solution is to shoot them up a bit first.***

# VAMPIRES AND THEIR PREY

Alright, 'dhampires' if you want to be technically correct. But anyway…



**VAMPIRE VIEWING**
*Rayne can switch visual modes to make the most of her funky vampire abilities.*



**AURA VISION**
*Everything goes blue and sources of food, (ie, people) are highlighted. Quite handy, that.*



**EXTRUDED VIEW**
*This is just your standard sniper zoom. For Rayne, it's a built-in feature of her eyes.*



**DILATED PERCEPTION**
*Or Bullet Time, as Max Payne called it. Slows down everything, and makes bullets visible.*

**BASIC NAZIS**
*Blade fodder. If they take any of Rayne's health, she'll get it back by eating them.*



**OFFICERS**
*These guys are a bit tougher, and killing a whole army's worth of them is Rayne's goal.*



**SPIDER BEASTIES**
*No problem. Just hack off enough legs and they won't be going anywhere in a hurry.*







**HEAD WORMS**
*These lovely creatures replace a Nazi's natural head and spinal cord. Mmm, spinal.*



△ **The hilarious Nazi priest in his pulpit-cum-tank thing.**



△ **Rayne's guns auto-target the nearest enemies.**



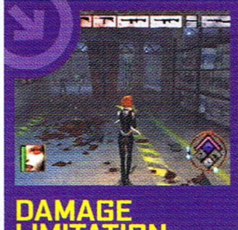
△ **This sadistic Nazi torturess is one of many bosses.**

animation kicks in and your foe staggers away minus a hand, arm, leg or whatever. Sometimes they even get lopped in half at the waist – if they still have arms, they'll drag their torsos across the floor for a bit, trailing bucketloads of blood. What you can't do is control where and how Rayne strikes. It seems totally random. An *Eternal Darkness*-style targeting feature would have improved things immeasurably.

> **"IF THEY STILL HAVE ARMS, ENEMIES DRAG THEIR TORSOS ACROSS THE FLOOR FOR A BIT, TRAILING BLOOD..."**

## GUNDEAD

There are guns, too. Loads of them. *Blood Rayne*'s most unusual feature, something we're sure to see copied in future games, is the way the huge inventory of firearms is handled. When Rayne walks over a gun, discarded because its owner no longer has the fingers to use it, she'll pick it up and put it in one of her weapon slots. The ammo isn't added to any grand total – it's just a gun with however many bullets are left in the clip, and once emptied into some Nazis, she'll throw it away. There are rocket launchers too, and in some areas you can blast chunks out of the plasterwork.



**DAMAGE LIMITATION**

***Apart from smashing up the scenery in certain rooms, Rayne can also tear strips out of the Nazi banners hanging up around the secret base. There's plenty of this sort of incidental detail, so it's a shame that the game doesn't move a bit more smoothly to allow you to appreciate it. The dodgy frame-rate spoils things.***

The platform-jumping sections are maddeningly hard, thanks to poor controls and a dodgy camera that sometimes loses Rayne off the bottom of the screen, and after a while the Nazis give way to less interesting monsters that look like bits of meat. These sometimes possess soldiers, enabling them to survive some really nasty mutilations for a lot longer than before, but their resilience can be irritating.

For its faults, *Blood Rayne* does have a certain something that makes it worth checking out. Call it a sense of style, maybe. Anything that includes such delights as a blood-crazed Nazi priest with an armoured pulpit deserves a look. You probably won't still be playing it this time next month, but something in here is bound to give you nightmares you won't forget in a hurry.

MARTIN KITTS

**+**

- Ridiculously gory.
- Nice environments.
- Guns, guns, guns.
- Leather-clad vampires.

**–**

- Repetitive fights.
- Some dubious collision detection.
- *Nightmare Creatures.*

**IF YOU LIKE THIS...**
**Spider-Man**
**Activision**
**NGC/69 72%**
**Third-person combat without the blood (or vampires, Nazis, etc).**

**6 VISUALS**
Great backgrounds, slightly dodgy frame-rate at times.

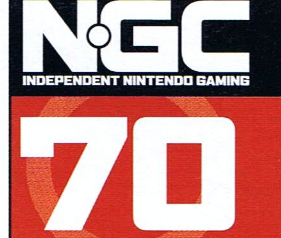
**7 SOUNDS**
Loads of somewhat unnerving screams from mutilated guards.

**5 MASTERY**
The combat seems too lightweight, and blows rarely connect.

**6 LIFESPAN**
It's a laugh, we'll give it that. A week's rental is all you'll need.



**VERDICT**
**Definitely try it before you splash out on an import copy, because you might hate it. But do try it. It's a future cult favourite. Maybe.**



**ALWAYS SAVING YOU CASH!**

Because our reviews are the best and most honest in the business, we promise you'll never waste a penny thanks to our Essential list, which keeps you in touch with the best games money can buy...

# NGC ESSENTIAL

## THE BEST CUBE GAMES MONEY CAN BUY...

### FIVE EXTREMELY ANNOYING WAYS TO DIE

Annoying enough, but sometimes your demise is so blood-boilingly, pad-smashingly unfair that the only solution is to press the off switch and go for a walk in the FRICKIN' PARK!



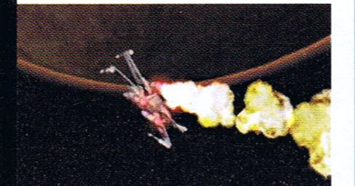
ZOMBIE TRAP



PLATFORM FALLING



SHOT BY A MONKEY



HIT-AND-RUN TIES



CRUSHED BY A BUILDING




## 1 MARIO SUNSHINE

**NINTENDO ■ NGC/73** 96

The wait may have been long, but by Mike was it worth it. Mazza makes his first proper appearance on a Nintendo console in the follow-up to *Super Mario 64* – this time he's cleaning up oily muck on a tropical island and trying to find out what evil villain put it there. With the same pick-up-and-play intuitiveness, polished Nintendo visuals, and sense of pure fun, this one pushes all the right buttons.

NGC STAR GAME

## 2 SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE



**ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68** 95

Eye-singeing multiplayer battles, ingenious moves, brilliant cameo appearances from about every Nintendo character ever, plus some of the sweetest looks yet squeezed from the Cube – *Smash Bros* is everything you went purple for and more.

NGC STAR GAME

## 3 TIMESPLITTERS 2



**EIDOS ■ NGC/73** 91

A stonker of a time-travelling FPS with more than a whiff of *GoldenEye*, *TS2* crept out of nowhere to officially become Gamecube's finest example of the genre – and with *Perfect Dark* destined for the Bill Box, it looks as if it's here to stay.

NGC STAR GAME

## 4 WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM 



**NINTENDO ■ NGC/67** 91

In PAL form this sodden sequel might suffer from some *tiny* frame-rate problems, but it's still a fabulous racer, replete with *the* most incredible water effects ever. Fast, dynamic, accessible and sublime to control, *Wave Race* is absolute magic.

NGC STAR GAME

## 5 LUIGI'S MANSION 



**NINTENDO ■ NGC/67** 90

Mazza might have been late to the party this time round, but brother Luigi managed to ease the pain with this fantastically playable combination of *Super Mario World* and Ghostbusters. It's maybe a bit short, but still ace.

NGC STAR GAME

## 6 RESIDENT EVIL 



**ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72** 89

The classic zombie-horror fear-fest recreated to take advantage of the Cube's superior electrical witchcraft. Stunning, mesmerising visuals, unrivalled atmosphere and a brilliant storyline. Shame it still has the old-fashioned rotate-and-shoot control system from the dark PS One days, mind...

## 7 ETERNAL DARKNESS 



**NINTENDO ■ NGC/74** 89

A rollicking Lovecraftian yarn of ancient evils coming home to roost that more than gives *Resi* a run for its money, replacing slick zombie-slaying action with a wonderfully creepy story told through a cast of 12 playable characters, and a truly innovative magic system. Get this one in...

## 8 SUPER MONKEY BALL 



**SEGA ■ NGC/67** 88

Ingenious update of *Marble Madness*, with simians rolling around strange landscapes trying to collect 'nanas. Chuck in a monkey version of *Mario Kart*, pool, some golf and a tilting boxing ring with springy boxing gloves and you've got the weirdest, most wonderful Gamecube game out.

## 9 STAR WARS: ROGUE LEADER





**ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68** **87**

One of the best-looking console games ever made (well, so far), *Rogue Leader* also happens to be one of the slickest, most memorable Star Wars games of all time, bolting eye-popping renditions of the Battle of Hoth and the Trench Run onto silky smooth space battles. Get it in now.

## 10 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3



**ACTIVISION ■ NGC/67** **87**

It's clearly a no-brainer of a PS2 conversion, but *Tony Hawk's 3* is so good it hardly seems to matter. Packed with unbelievable grinds and stunts, backed up by a mountain of hidden extras, and benefiting from vast skate parks, if you haven't tried *Hawk's* on for size before, now's the time.

## 11 SSX TRICKY



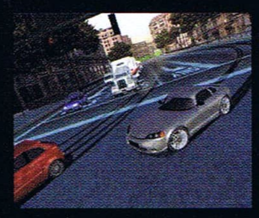


**EA SPORTS ■ NGC/69** **87**

Like *Tony Hawk's*, this has got PS2 written all over it in big, fat neon letters, but it still manages to perform wonders with your Cube. Fast, spectacular courses, brilliant shortcuts and secrets and some timely mid-piste scrappage make this conversion brilliant, *brilliant* entertainment.

## 12 BURNOUT





**ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67** **86**

On the N64, we had to wait three years for a driving game. Now we've got a killer racer from day one: with lightning-fast, spectacular crashes, inch-perfect handling and one of the smoothest, most impressive engines around, *Burnout* is a dream of a game, even if it's over a bit quickly.

## 13 LOST KINGDOMS





**ACTIVISION ■ NGC/70** **86**

Nerdy CCG-ing comes to the Cube in this surprisingly accomplished RPG, in which you collect cards and battle mythical monsters in pretty fantasy landscapes. Might not sound like much, but *Lost Kingdoms* is far more than the sum of its parts. Try it and you just might get hooked.

## 14 PIKMIN





**NINTENDO ■ NGC/69** **85**

Dreamily created using textures from Shigsy's own garden, *Pikmin* is a genius real-time strategy with multi-coloured vegetables, beautifully simple controls and expansive, tactile worlds. It's over a bit quickly if truth be told, but don't let that put you off: this is Nintendo brilliance.

## 15 EXTREME G 3



**ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67** **85**

A bit of an underrated gem, *Extreme G 3* offers pulse-shattering speed, huge, sprawling, well-designed tracks, some ingenious – and surprisingly tactical – weaponry and eye-spanking visuals. It's a tiny bit soulless, and the multiplayer's somewhat rank, but this is good stuff.

## 16 ISS 2





**KONAMI ■ NGC/68** **83**

This once-untouchable football giant makes its debut on Gamecube sporting a few nasty cuts and bruises, including a lack of pace, huge turning circles and 'sweet spots'. Even so, it still rates as a majestic example of footie in a disc, even though an *ISS* with faults is hard to stomach.

## 17 AGGRESSIVE INLINE





**ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72** **81**

Pleasantly surprising roller-skating game from the same stable as *Dave Mirra*, that sensibly uses the tried-and-tested *Hawk's* formula, while remaining more accessible than it. Massive, challenge-filled arenas, no time limits, and unique, 'jiggling' physics make this a real alternative to The Tonester.

## 18 DIE HARD: VENDETTA



**VIVENDI ■ NGC/74** **80**

The Die Hard franchise was crying out for someone to make a decent fist of an FPS out of it, and this might just be it. As ropey the controls and weapons may be, Vendetta is still a rock-solid shooter with some original ideas, intelligent puzzle-solving, and swearing that would turn your hair blue.

## 19 CAPCOM VS SNK 2 EO





**CAPCOM ■ NGC/72** **79**

Not to everyone's tastes, but if you're in the mood for a two-dimensional retro smack fest, you've come to the right place. Make your mates feel pain with over 30 original pugilists from the elderly *Street Fighter* and *King of Fighters* series. Shame they couldn't have tidied up the graphics, though…

## 20 BEACH SPIKERS





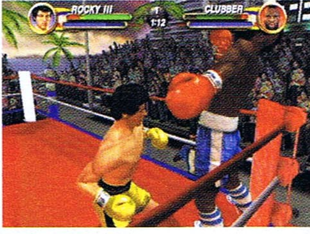
**SEGA ■ NGC/72** **79**

Ball game featuring rubbery ladies in skimpy bikinis squealing and smacking a pig's bladder over a net. *Beach Spikers* is far more than the sum of its parts, though – behind the vacuous exterior lies an addictive game of skill with cool real-time sand effects. Shame the 1-P ain't so good.

**EVERY GAMECUBE GAME EVER ...RATED!**



**STARFOX ADVENTURES**



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# GEAR

Another spread of deplorable tat and useful gadgets and gizmos. Don't waste a penny of your cash until you've read this.

## WHAT IS A BEST BUY?

Every month we'll pick out one piece of kit that stands head and shoulders above the rest and award it our coveted Best Buy badge. A Best Buy will combine superb quality with fantastic value for money – when we hand something a reward like that, you know it's worth investing in.

NGC BEST BUY






## GAMECUBE CARRYCASE

**FROM COMPETITION PRO ● £19.99**

Not bad at all, this. It has a similar build quality and capacity to Nintendo's own efforts, while looking and feeling spookily the same. You can squeeze in your Gamecube, power supply, a clutch of joypads and a fair selection of games – once you've got it stuffed to bursting point, it's doubtful you'll need to fit any more goodies in there anyway. The other advantage is that's it's cheaper than the official equivalent. Worth a look.

### NOT AS GOOD AS...



**NINTENDO BAGS**
**FROM NINTENDO ● £VARIABLE**
Nintendo's official merchandise is certainly of a higher quality, but you'll have to pay more for the pleasure of owning a proper Gamecube bag.

## X-RACER WHEEL

**FROM COMPETITION PRO ● £29.99**

Another wheel, another reason to steer clear of your local store's peripherals section. You'll have seen this variety of cheap tatness a million times before – that classic grating plastic-on-plastic feel has been flawlessly reproduced, and it takes a good 15-degree turn on the wheel before whatever you're driving actually starts to react. Nice. Then there's the irritating jar when it hits its neutral point, and the buttons are nasty in a kind of wobbly, rubbery ZX-81 way. This just makes driving games harder anyway – so what's the point?

### NOT AS GOOD AS...



**TOPDRIVE PRO**
**FROM LOGIC 3 ● £29.99**
Reviewed in this very section. It's certainly better than Competition Pro's pile of dreck. In fact, it just might be the best wheel available – but that's not saying very much.



## TOPDRIVE PRO
**LOGIC3 ● £29.99**

After much deliberation, we came to the conclusion that this is the best wheel available. It's nicely springy, doesn't grate against its own parts, and is pleasing to hold. There's not too much resistance when you pass the wheel over the central position, and it even has a switch to adjust the sensitivity of the wheel to your own tastes. Even the buttons are well placed and don't feel as though they've been installed by a five-year-old, while the pedals themselves are robust and offer plenty of resistance under your feet. Not a bad effort at all.

### BETTER THAN...



**X-RACER WHEEL**
**FROM COMPETITION PRO ● £29.99**
If steering wheels were dung, this would be crusty on the outside, and a loathsome concoction of filthy bovine sludge on the inside. Do we like it? No, we don't. And neither will you. Despicable.




## GBA ROBO POWER
**FROM LOGIC 3 ● £19.99**

This kind of tat really winds us up. What is the actual point in it? Look at it – it's a bleeding disgrace. A light that looks like a robot. Nice – if it wasn't for the fact that looking like a robot is the best thing it does. The magnifier does you no favours, which is hindered further by the fact that the light itself is useless, and the speakers make everything sound loud and horribly distorted. Spend money on this and you only have yourself to blame.

### NOT AS GOOD AS...



**AFTERBURNER**
**FROM TRITON LABS ● £35.00**
The crème de la crème of GBA add-ons. Although you'll need an MSc in electronics to install it properly, it's well worth the effort.



## TFT MONITOR
**FROM COMPETITION PRO ● £90**

In fairness, this isn't a bad piece of kit – especially compared to some of the poorer-quality screens out there – but it's still miles behind Joytech's superb piece of work. It doesn't use the digital output for starters, and the quality of your picture depends on which angle you're looking at it from. The screen is a little smaller than the Joytech one, although it is about a tenner cheaper. Fairly good effort, but if you must buy a 'portable' screen that you'll still need an external power supply for, you'll be better off with Joytech's model.

### NOT AS GOOD AS...

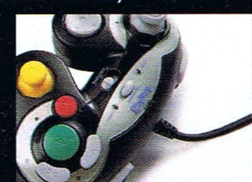


**HIGH DEFINITION 5.6" TFT COLOUR MONITOR**
**FROM JOYTECH ● £90.00**
There really is no substitute. Joytech's screen is bigger, cleaner and clearer than any other out there.






**5.6" TFT MONITOR**
**JOYTECH ● £99**
The sharpest, almost cheapest, biggest and best screen around. Absolutely no contest whatsoever (not that there's much).



**PRO PAD**
**LOGIC3 ● £14.99**
So far, the best third-party controller around – we'll be surprised if anyone beats it. It's sturdy, the analogue is almost perfect, and it's comfortable to hold. Lovely.



**XA 3021 GAMING THEATRE**
**ALTEC LANSING ● £79.99**
The design might not be to everyone's tastes, but there's no arguing with the sound quality. So far, this is the best system to splash out on.



**TOPDRIVE PRO**
**LOGIC3 ● £30**
Overtaken Saitek's wheel as the best your money can buy. It's a decent price, is well built and it doesn't make driving games harder than they should be. Definitely worth a look if this is your thang...



**AFTER-BURNER**
**TRITON LABS ● £35**
Most GBA lights don't require sawing, gluing and soldering to install, but once fitted there's no better lighting alternative to this.



EXPERT TIPS, HUGE FEATURES, TRIVIA AND MORE

# EXTENDED PLAY

## COINING IT



### MARIO TIPS

The third and final part of our ginormous *Mario Sunshine* guide. Find every single Blue Coin – there are 240 of them, you know… P86

## WORD UP



### TALK TIME

This month we grill the brains of Nintendo of Europe's Online Editor – a familiar-looking fellow who goes by the name of Mark Green! P112

### I'M THE BEST

Are you? Are you really? Put yourself to the test here – and beat the rest. Oh, go on. P102

### LETTERS

Your excellent epistles explicitly answered – with editorial authority! P106

## PLUS!

### TIPS EXTRA

All the tips that are fit to print – and then some. P96

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NGC TELLS YOU HOW TO...

in association with Virgin megastores

FIND ALL THE BLUE COINS IN...

# MARIO SUNSHINE

NGC GUARANTEE
EVERY BLUE COIN FOUND!

NGC STAR GAME

## WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

**Mazza goes on a well-deserved holiday, but ends up having to clean up dirt. Much more fun that that sounds. The much-anticipated follow-up to *Mario 64*, *Sunshine* is more polished and more of the same – which can only be a good thing.**



## WHAT WE SAID IN ISSUE 73!

***"Super Mario Sunshine is a genuine, utter delight to play, and the scope for exploration and discovery, for experimenting with the huge amount of moves and flexibility at your fingertips... it's breathtaking."***




## Got all the Shines? Nicely! But 240 blue coins still await...

Some coins only appear in specific episodes, and we've tried to show this where possible by listing them as they become available. We've also designed our guide so you can tick off ones you're sure you have.

**Checking Your Progress**
Highlight any island region's name on the map to see your score for that area. Your blue coin total is the last one on the screen.

**Symbol Coins**
After you wash off the symbol, there's a time limit in which to claim your coin. The camera always defaults to a set angle, so learn where to run before you adjust with the left collar or right thumbstick en route. Also try:

- Spraying the graffiti from as far away as possible.
- Removing enemies and crate obstructions beforehand.
- Finding a good straight line on which to use the repeated B belly-flop or R + B waterslide.
- Finding 3D shortcuts, like spin-jumps, wall-jumps, and butt-slams to drop out of the air quickly.

Some coins are easier to get with turbo and rocket nozzles (or Yoshi), or when you've completed the world and left it free of goop and toxic water. If it's not urgent then leave it until later.

**The Birds, the Bees and the Butterflies**
Blue creatures mean blue coins. Knock down birds with squirts, but it's easier to eat birds and butterflies with Yoshi's tongue-flick. With insects, Yoshi has to eat them all. To open a bee's nest, hit it with Yoshi spit 'til it drops, then chomp away. If you flee and miss a few bees, the rest will reappear when you detach the nest again.

**M Signatures**
The dotted M is worth a blue coin, and can appear on floors as well as walls.

**Coin Logos**
Blue or brown Shine-shaped outlines, worth a blue coin, and invisible 'til you squirt 'em. Spot the flash of gold when spraying.

**Fruit Collectors**
The game won't start counting 'til the basket-owner asks for fruit. To be sure to get fruit in the basket, stand on the brim and drop with B. Use wall or spin-jumps to climb; nozzles don't work while carrying.

The Durian Fruit requires footie skills: to dribble, just walk into it. Moving faster means kicking harder. Move slowly for close possession. To punt it precisely, line up using the L collar, run at it and tap B just before you connect.

# DELFINO PLAZA

**COINS 1-3** ❑❑❑
Sewer pipes under the plaza hold three coins. Sewer Pipe 1 leads under the north end of the level behind the Shine Gate. Sewer Pipe 2 runs under the water in the central harbour. Sewer Pipe 3 is the connecting sewer between the plaza and the western island.

**COINS 4-6** ❑❑❑
There are three M signatures to find. The first is in the harbour, behind a crate below the Shine Gate. Number two is painted on a tower behind a giant crate on the western rooftops. The last M is on the weather-vane tower nearest the Pinna Park cannon.

**COINS 7-8** ❑❑
The X symbol on the Pianta statue matches the X that you can find on the quay, near the Blue Coin Exchange.

**COINS 9-10** ❑❑
There are two blue birds flying around the plaza rooftops.

**COIN 11** ❑
Jailhouse waterfront: head right from the statue to spy a wee entrance you can reach from the water by jumping and hovering.

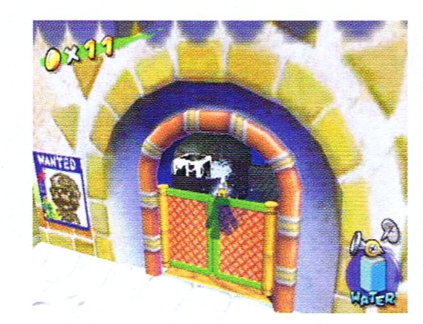
**COIN 12** ❑
A burning Pianta will be running around the plaza after you've completed Bianco Hills. Extinguish his flames and talk to him.

**COINS 13-16** ❑❑❑❑
Fruit Collectors – see the section to the right.






# BIANCO HILLS




For the green Coconut basket on the western island, use your FLUDD to squirt down coconuts from the palm tree. The best place to get the Durian is under an awning near the Blue Coin Exchange – roll it into the corridor, punt it over the water, hover after it and then boot it again at an angle to ricochet it up the ramp. You should find a penalty situation awaiting you at the top.

**NGC INSIDER KNOWLEDGE!**

**FILL 'ER UP**

*Remember that the Gadd boxes which contain the FLUDD extensions can also be used to fill up your water pack…*

## COIN 17 ❑
You'll find a pair of saloon doors at sea level in one of the larger pillars off the coast of the lighthouse. Use a turbo nozzle to smash your way inside.

## COINS 18-19 ❑❑
Yellow goop is barring the way to these two coins, and it can only be removed with with the application of Yoshi spit. Look behind the bell tower on top of the courtroom building (above the police) and on the taller weather-vane tower.

## DELFINO AIRSTRIP COIN ❑
Bust inside the control tower with the turbo nozzle, then melt the ice cube with water to thaw out the coin inside. Note: this coin will actually show up as Coin 20 on your Delfino Plaza total.




## COIN 1 ❑
Underwater, in the river at the bottom of the entrance path, heading left past the log to the wooden gate at the end.

## COINS 2-5 ❑❑❑❑
There are four M signatures here. M 1 is on the white dividing wall before the waterwheel. M 2 is on one of the houses. M 3 is on top of the dividing wall next to the waterfall. M 4 is on the big windmill.

## COINS 6-7 ❑❑
The two X symbols are on different sides of the white dividing wall. Walk along the top of the wall to find both, as one is inside a narrow enclosure (wall-jump to get out).

## COIN 8 ❑
There are two windsail bridges you can stand on and rotate with your squirt nozzle. Rotate the second bridge until you can reach the mid-air blue coin.

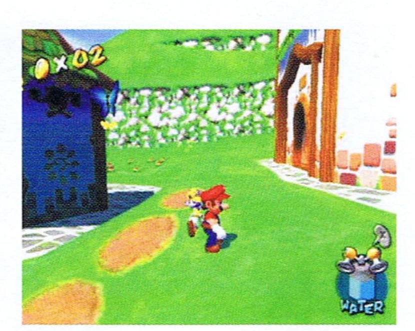
## COIN 9 ❑
On the tall house boasting M signature number two, the taller of the rooftop towers has a blue coin under its roof.

## COIN 10 ❑
The other large house in the village has a balcony overlooking the river. You can hover to reach it. Spray the left-hand alcove to reveal a blue coin. Lovely.

## COIN 11 ❑
Windmill secret: if you squirt the propellers of any of the tall windmill platforms, the blades spin faster until, sometimes, a yellow coin pops out on top. Jump on to the dividing wall at the first opportunity after entering the level and the first one on the right surrenders a blue coin instead.

## COIN 12 ❑
Swim out into the far side of the lake. Underwater, near the base of one of the windmill platforms in the lake, is a blue coin. There are yellow coins above, as a guide.

## COIN 13 ❑
In Episode 2 (though it's easier in Episode 3), follow the path to the big windmill. Rising out of the lake to its left is a tall pillar of rock. Squirt the grass on top to reveal the coin.










## COIN 14 ❑
In Episode 3, a gooped Pianta will appear on the hedgerow path up to the big windmill. Clean and shine him for your prize.

## COIN 15 ❑
After you've defeated Petey Piranha for the first time, a Pokey cactus will appear on top of the big windmill in his place. Jump on its head to defeat it for a coin.

## COIN 16 ❑
After Coin 15, take a look out from the top of the windmill and you'll see that there's a blue coin sitting on a windmill platform below you. You can get there by a long trek of ropes and bounces, but it's easier to time a jump off the big windmill's sails and hover over.

## COIN 17 ❑
Once the bridge to the big windmill is fully restored, you'll see a blue coin under the mesh. Perform a double-jump from the tightrope underneath to grab on to the mesh and then hand-swing your way over to the coin.



### COIN 18 ❑
From Episode 4 onwards, another Pokey cactus appears on the furthest of the brick buttresses overlooking the lake. After passing through the dividing wall, cross the stepping bridge of three upright logs and spin-jump up to the brickwork.

### COIN 19 ❑
On the far-west side of the village is a high ledge in the boundary cliff wall. The coin up here is easiest to get with a rocket boost.

### COIN 20 ❑
In Episode 5, follow the entrance path down but get onto the wall before crossing the river. There's a round white turret here with a gooped Pianta on top. Clean him off for a coin, or 1-Up thereafter.

### COIN 21 ❑
In Episode 6, after defeating Petey Piranha for a second time, you'll see a couple of clouds over his sleeping place high in the hills. Spray the nearest cloud to enlarge it and use it as a platform to hover over to the tall pillar of rock. Spray the grass on top for a hidden coin.

### COIN 22 ❑
In the hills near Coin 21 is a cross of windmill platforms. Use a Rocket Boost to reach the coin on top.




### COIN 23 ❑
From Episode 6, you'll see a blue coin below a windmill platform up in those hills. Drop from the platform and hover to reach it.

### COIN 24 ❑
Palm tree secret: in Episode 6, getting on top of the palm trees around the lake and squirting the crown of the trunk can produce a yellow coin (hovering over the centre also works for this). The tree nearest the waterwheel produces a blue coin instead.

### COIN 25 ❑
In Episode 6, look for a yellow coin on the near shore of the dirty lake. A trail of coins leads underwater to the blue coin.

### COINS 26-27 ❑❑
In Episode 7, two O symbols appear on the two biggest houses in the village. You're going to need the speed of watersliding or the turbo nozzle.

### COIN 28
A blue bird appears in the village from Episode 7.

### COINS 29-30 ❑❑
Wake Yoshi for Episode 8. There's a blue butterfly around the village, and two beehives on palm trees beyond the wall – one holds a blue coin, the other has a 1-Up.






# RICCO HARBOUR




### COINS 1-5 ❑❑❑❑❑
There are five M signatures here. M 1 is painted on the warehouses beside the sunglasses vendor. M 2 is on the cliff face above, so jump up on top of the warehouse. M 3 is on the side of the ship on the lower quay. M 4 is inside the cage of the ship – drop inside and clean up the oily goop to find it on the deck. M 5 is hidden under the oily goop on the lower quay.

### COIN 6 ❑
Also on the lower quay. Butt-slam the corner crate for a blue coin.

### COIN 7 ❑
Then spray the wall to the left of that crate to find a coin logo.

### COIN 8 ❑
While you're here, wall-jump up between the scaffolding around Ricco Tower (as seen in the game's 'attract mode' demo) and use a hover to get to the blue coin at the top.

### COINS 9-10 ❑❑
Use a spin-jump to get on top of the ship's smokestack. From here you'll see a blue coin on top of the nearby sea crane, and one on the scaffolding above and left of it near the red mesh frames. Incidentally, a spin-jump and hover from the top of the ship's smokestack is a neat shortcut for getting to the blue girders high over the water on this level, or to those red mesh frames.

### COIN 11 ❑
Get up to the first of those red mesh frames and jump back from the top of it to get to another high girder with a coin at the end.

### COIN 12 ❑
As you're bound to fall off that scaffolding rig at some point, look for a blue coin in the water beneath the orange platform with an arrow on top.

### COIN 13 ❑
Head out to the far seaward side of the rig and you'll see a line of yellow coins leading down one girder to the sea. Drop off and hand-slide down to grab the blue coin.



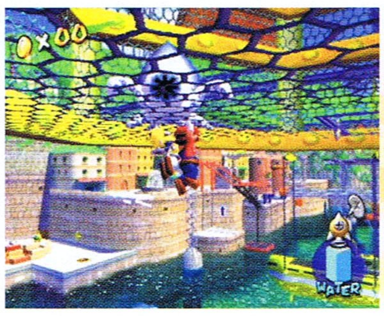


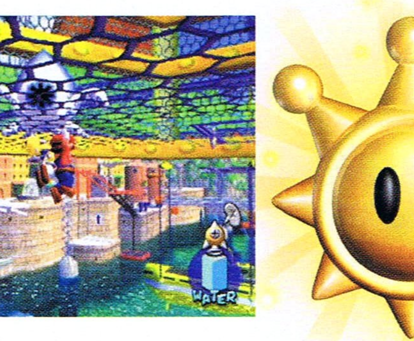













### COIN 14 ❑
Raising the yellow submarine is worth a blue coin. Be sure to keep spraying the propeller blades until the submarine reaches its highest point.

### COIN 15 ❑
Skip over to the upper quay and look for a coin directly above the harbour's fountain.

### COINS 16-17 ❑❑
The next two M signatures are on the upper quay. A sailor near the fountain asks you to scrub off M 6, then get on to the rooftops further along to find M 7.

### COINS 18-19 ❑❑
In Episode 2, hop on a Blooper and follow coin trails to find two blue coins that you can jump for, one on the ocean side and one near the tunnel entrance.

### COINS 20-21 ❑❑
In Episode 3, get onto the ship and look for two yellow spiders that are worth blue coins. One can be punched off from inside the cage. Then get onto the cage roof, squirt the spiders that are hanging underneath, and butt-slam directly over them to knock them off.

### COIN 22 ❑
Episode 3 again. At one corner of the rig, high up in the scaffolding, you'll find the box for the rocket nozzle (follow that red mesh route). Return to the lower quay, get on top of the brick chimney, and use it to clean up that line of coins above you. Note that you can use the rocket to shortcut your way to the Shine's yellow cage from underneath.

### COINS 23-24 ❑❑
Now that you have the rocket nozzle, you can also tackle the last two M signatures. M 8 is on a ledge in the cliffs, beside a palm tree. M 9 is on top of one of the nearby high sea platforms.

### COIN 25 ❑
Return to that giant yellow cage in Episode 4. Instead of a Shine, you'll now find a Blooper inside worth a coin.

### COIN 26 ❑
By Episode 6, the Piantas on the upper quay have opened a fish market. Squirt their catch in the central baskets to bag a blue coin.

### COINS 27-28 ❑❑
You'll have seen the two brown X symbols already – one on the upper quay, one on Ricco Tower – but you really need the turbo nozzle to get one of them. The other you can just make by watersliding through the sewer.

### COINS 29-30 ❑❑
Once you've hatched Yoshi in Episode 8, start chomping blue butterflies. Then take him to the lower quay and eat the yellow spider on the wall for the last coin.



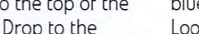








# GELATO BEACH



### COINS 1-2 ❑❑
Turn around and swim to the palm tree island, then walk cautiously to the top of the tallest palm for the first coin. Drop to the swing and start squirting until you get enough height to reach the second.

### COINS 3-4 ❑❑
Go for a swim and you'll find another two blue coins on the sea bed. They're pretty easy to spot.




### COINS 5-6 ❑❑
Not so obvious are the blue coins 'sleeping with the fishes'. One swims with a school of red fish, the other moves hidden among blue fish.

### COIN 7 ❑
Head back to the beach and look for a red cataquack standing out among the blues. Squirt him into a daze and butt-slam his belly for a coin.

### COIN 8 ❑
Head inside the Sand Cabana fruit bar (a blue building) on the right side of the beach. Look up using the Y view and you'll see a blue coin in the ceiling. Try the cushions – they're bouncy!

### COIN 9 ❑
Now go to the Surf Cabana juice bar on the other side of the beach. Dive into the water and swim right underneath it – below the seating area you'll find a coin stash that includes one blue coin.

### COINS 10-11 ❑❑
Each side of the beach has triangular symbols on its cliffs. You can either try watersliding across the beach on your belly, or wait for the turbo nozzle.

### COIN 12 ❑
There's an M signature waiting for you to clean on a ledge in the cliff near the Sand Cabana. You'll need to get yourself up onto the roof of the Cabana first, then hover across to where you can see the gold coins.

**NGC INSIDER KNOWLEDGE!**

**JET GRAFFITI**

*Dashing between two graffiti points for blue coins can be tough. Try different nozzles to make things easier.*

### COINS 13-14 ❑❑
Climb to the top of the hills and you'll find the birds tend to gather on the wires above the small amphitheatre. There are two blue birds to knock out.

### COIN 15 ❑
Get onto the wires to find a blue coin above a pole near the amphitheatre.

### COIN 16 ❑
From the amphitheatre, take the brick path west and hover over the gaps to avoid the slippery grass slides. At its end, drop down into the gap in the hill to find a coin stash.

### COIN 17 ❑
Look up from Coin 16 to see a line of yellow coins and a blue high above. Use the tightropes to reach it.

### COINS 18-20 ❑❑❑
In Episode 2, return to the location of the Episode 1 sandcastle and spray the ground for a coin logo. There's another one further up the beach from the boat nearest your starting point. Finally, a smaller coin logo will appear under one of the vertical lines of coins on the beach.

### COIN 21 ❑
In Episode 4, spray the sand near the surfboards to find another coin logo.

### COINS 22-25 ❑❑❑❑
Yikes. Remember the sand bird ride in Episode 4? Well, you're going to have to do it again, and look out for passing clouds bearing blue coins. There are four of them to collect.

### COIN 26 ❑
In Episode 5, a line of coins appears on top of the wooden dome next to the giant mirrors. Use a rocket boost to reach the blue coin at the top.

### COIN 27 ❑
From that platform, you should also spy a lone blue cataquack asleep in the top of a tree. Wake him up with a squirt so that he drops out, then stun him and slam him.

### COIN 28 ❑
The blender on top of the Surf Cabana is functional from Episode 6 onwards, so grab a piece of fruit from the Sand Cabana (squirting one off the table makes it easier to pick up) and carry it over. Spin-jump or use the veranda furniture to get on the roof without your hover nozzle, then drop the fruit into the whirling blades.

### COINS 29-30 ❑❑
You can only find Yoshi in Episode 6, and you need his seed spit to dissolve the yellow goop over the footprint dune bud (it's next to the Sand Cabana). There's a blue coin in the bottom of the footprint. Then ride to the wooden dome of coin 26 and look underneath it to see a beehive that needs a spot of chewing.














# PINNA PARK

**COINS 1-2** ❑❑
There are two coin logos to uncover in the beachfront sand. Spray between cannon and tree, then between tree and basket.

**COIN 3** ❑
Inside the park, step onto the seashell merry-go-round. Spraying the clam shells opens them, and the green one contains a blue coin.



**COINS 4-5** ❑❑
There are two blue birds inside the park, one normally spotted near the entrance and the other around the rope bridge to the jet coaster.

**COIN 6** ❑
Enter the pool below the swinging galleons and turn towards the stairs you'd normally use to jump on them. There's a blue coin inside the scaffold that you can *just* reach by jumping out of the water directly underneath and hovering.

**COINS 7-9** ❑❑❑
Look for three M signatures in the park. M 1 is on the orange arch at the start of the climbing path. M 2 is behind the ferris wheel – headbutt the two brick blocks on the wall for a 1-Up, then look further up the wall. M 3 is actually right out the back of the park. Drop over the side to the little sandy beach with a palm tree and turn to face the wall.

**COINS 10-11** ❑❑
There are three symbol pairs in the park too. It's not hard to find them all in such a small space. You'll find an X on the big lemon tree and one on a white wall.

**COINS 12-13** ❑❑
Take the path up as far as the little Noki girl to find the higher of the two triangle symbols. The other one is on the ledge with the bananas.

**COINS 14-15** ❑❑
Both of the O symbols are on top of the ferris wheel.

**COIN 16**
At the top of the path, by the little Noki girl, look out towards the jet coaster. You should see a blue coin behind the boarding point for the ride.

**COIN 17** ❑
Beside the ramp to the back of the ferris wheel you'll find a goomba carrying a precarious tower of micro-goombas. Squirt them off and then stomp the fat one to get a bluey.



**COINS 18-19** ❑❑
Hover over to the green mesh ramp and run to the top. You can drop off the wooden platform onto a blue coin from here. You should also see a blue coin far below, on top of the narrow green struts supporting the galleons, and can drop and hover over to it.

**COINS 20-21** ❑❑
There are a couple of ways to reach the high green cage containing a blue coin. You could jump off the second galleon and hover over, or you could return to the lowest end of the green mesh and spin-jump to the underside. There's another coin on a wooden platform high above the cage, and the idea is to jump on and off the galleon for height. If you wait until you have Yoshi, though, you can use his super spin-jump from the top of the cage and, keeping A held, curl round onto the top of the platform when he flaps.

**COINS 22-27** ❑❑❑❑❑❑
In Episode 2, six baskets with blue coins appear all over the beach. The only way to smash them open is with a bullet bill, so get the attention of a homing purple bill and lead him a merry chase into a basket.

**COIN 28-29** ❑❑
After you've unlocked Yoshi in the game, he'll appear under a tree on the beachfront. Spray the sand to dig up fruit until you find what he needs to hatch (if it's the wrong fruit, chuck it in the sea for speedy respawning) and then look for two blue butterflies to munch.

**COIN 30** ❑
Yoshi appears inside the park for Episode 6. Ride him over to where you fought Mecha Bowser, then look outside the perimeter of the park until you spot a blue butterfly fluttering around a stretch of sand.






# SIRENA BEACH



### COIN 1 ❑
Run to the end of the beach in Episode 1 and jump into the waves to spy a coin on the sea bed.

### COINS 2-3 ❑❑
Head back to the nearest pool with a palm tree at its centre and start cleaning up the mess. Two Noki people are trapped under the electric goop and need rescuing.

### COIN 4 ❑
Episode 2: between the sunbeds facing out to sea is a small stone windbreak with mosaics of a bird and a fish. Spray it to nab the coin.

### COIN 5 ❑
Then head up the path to the right-hand hut. There's a blue coin hidden under its straw roof.

### COIN 6 ❑
Also in Episode 2, pick up a barrel and throw it at the line of flaming urns in front of the hotel. Most flames produce yellow coins when doused but the second from the left holds a blue.

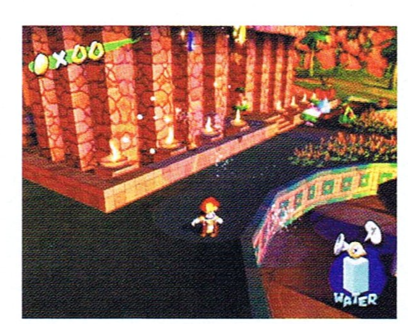
### COIN 7 ❑
Now water the bed of flowers in the far-right corner of Sirena Beach to earn yourself another coin.

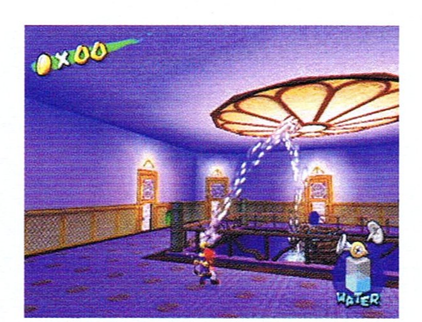
### COIN 8 ❑
Head around the rear of the hotel and you'll see a blue coin on the ledge that runs right around the second storey. A good triple-jump will get you up there.

### COIN 9 ❑
Still in Episode 2, enter the hotel. On the third floor is a boo disguised as a blue coin, but the shade of the standing lamp behind it produces a real coin when sprayed.

### COIN 10 ❑
Re-enter the hotel in Episode 3 and head to the third floor again. The entrance to the warp stage will have vanished, so spray the large, central ceiling light and a blue coin will drop down onto the totem pole.

### COINS 11-12 ❑❑
You'll need to be familiar with the route for solving Episode 3. Head to the room with the Dolphic posters on the wall and spray the furniture in the corner. Then squirt the posters and jump through them into a bedroom with another coin.












### COIN 13 ❑
With Yoshi, return to the storage room with the pineapple and eat the big boo to reach the area behind him.

### COIN 14 ❑
Take Yoshi up to the attic and clear out the big boos. There's a blue coin at the end of a cul-de-sac up here.

### COINS 15-16 ❑❑
Then look for the cracked tiles in the attic floor that you can butt-slam – one drops you into a female Pianta's hotel room. Spray her mirror for a coin, then butt-slam through her glass table to reach another room with a coin.

### COIN 17 ❑
Return to the storage room in Episode 4 and one of the pineapple crates will contain a blue coin instead.

### COIN 18 ❑
Also in Episode 4, a boo with a real blue coin inside him haunts the hotel attic.

### COIN 19 ❑
Once the hotel casino has opened (Episode 4 onwards) you can try butt-slamming the stools of the slot machines. Each slot produces a yellow coin – except for the special one, on the left, that holds a beautiful blue pay-out.





### COIN 20 ❑
There are two more burning censers to extinguish in the casino, too. One flame produces a blue coin.

### COIN 21 ❑
As soon as you've entered the casino in Episode 5, turn around 180 degrees and take a look up. An M signature taints the wall above the door.

### COINS 22-23 ❑❑
If you take the time to scrub off the Noki people who are mired in goop during the Episode 6 clean-up, two of them will reward you with blue coins instead of 1-Ups. Ain't that nice of them?

### COIN 24-26 ❑❑❑
Three more M signatures make an appearance in Episode 7. M 2 is located outside, on a wall to the right of the Hotel. Back indoors, you'll find M 3 up on the third floor, while M 4 is even higher up – in the attic, on a wall of the room at the centre of the maze.

### COINS 27-28 ❑❑
You'll find X symbols on the second and third floors of the hotel.

### COINS 29-30 ❑❑
The triangle symbols placed on the first and second floors can be a challenge in the wrong direction. It's easy enough to drop down from one storey to a lower one, but to get up you'll need to wall-jump off the central totem pole – as high as possible – before hovering up to the balcony.

# NOKI BAY



### COINS 1-2 ❑❑
There are two coins above the water. Either use the nearby boat (it helps to practise steering it with your squirt nozzle), or wait until a later episode when the water is free of poison.

### COIN 3 ❑
A trail of yellow coins under the water near the boathouse will guide you down to a blue coin in the depths.

### COIN 4 ❑
Even before the maze switches are working, you can get up to the top of the left-side cliff. Wall-jump up the tall green chute to a hidden passage in the cliff and you'll emerge by a switch with a tunnel above you. The tunnel bounces you up to a palm tree ledge. Drop down on the same side as that tunnel and you'll hit a higher ledge where spraying the wall opens two holes, one with a blue coin.

### COIN 5 ❑
Drop off that ledge and hover back toward the cliff face, handsliding down to another ledge with two holes and a blue coin.

### COINS 6-7 ❑❑
Return to that palm tree ledge but look back to the green chute. Drop and hover over to the niche with seven stone switches. There are two blue coins in the holes here, which you can uncover by squirting.

### COIN 8 ❑
From the seven switches, carefully drop down the ledges below – they jut out like steps – and look back to the cliff you fell from. Below, you'll see a big niche and a small niche next to each other in the cliff-face. Jump over and handslide down the cliff to the big niche. Spray the wall to uncover three more hidden holes and a coin.

### COIN 9 ❑
Use your hover nozzle to move sideways to the small niche, then handslide down from there to another ledge. Spray the wall for two more holes and a coin (if your hover jets haven't uncovered them already).

### COIN 10 ❑
Adjacent to Coin 9 is another niche in need of spraying. Two stone switches, one blue coin on the right. Before you jump over to it, however, look up and to the right of it to see another niche…

### COIN 11 ❑
…because in that niche is another blue coin you'll have to scoop up. You can make it there from Coin 10 with a spin-jump and hover, or just go round the course again and slide down on the other side of the seven switches. Your call.

### COIN 12 ❑
From Coin 11, jump down to the green ledge but ignore the arrow sign telling you to drop down. See, below you is to a tunnel leading to a central stone switch that temporarily extends the height of the tall green chute. However, it's easier to stand on the edge of the green and aim down at the switch with the Y view. As soon as you've hit it, hover back to the niche of coin 11 and enter it to find a tunnel opening onto the green chute. Working against the clock, you need to wall-jump directly upwards to find another entrance




high above you in the same wall. This long tunnel ends in a cave mouth with a coin. (Also, if you haven't got coin 5, a tunnel on the other side of the chute also leads to it).

## COIN 13 ❑
There's a similar cave with a blue coin further along the cliff face from coin 12, but you may not be able to reach it immediately in the first Episode. You can see it if you climb to the top of the conch shell tower and look right of coin 12.

## COIN 14 ❑
Follow the green ledge around the cliff to spot an M signature painted on the wall.

## COIN 15-16 ❑❑
Now for the right-side cliff. At the edge facing open sea is a set of green ledges. Spin-jump and hover to climb up these ledges to the rocket nozzle. There are two coins here – one above you at the top of a vertical line of coins, one tempting you obviously above the nozzle box – but you should do them in that order, as you'll get punched off after collecting the obvious one.

## COIN 17 ❑
Just below the cannon is a narrow promontory (it sticks out over the waterfall in later levels). There's a blue coin in a deep niche underneath, but to reach it you need to drop off and then hover inside.

## COIN 18 ❑
Move on to Episode 2. Drop down to the wheel of the pulley and you'll see a groove in the rock that stretches round the cliff. You can drop down and use it as a handhold to edge along the face. Follow it to the end and hose the rock to unveil a hidden area and a blue coin.




## COIN 19 ❑
After coin 18, another groove appears that leads to a tall passage inside the rock. Wall-jump – you'll have to do it blind – all the way to the top for a blue coin.

## COIN 20 ❑
Back at the pulley wheel, you'll see another groove further up above the first. Follow it to the dead end and spray again to find another secret coin cubbyhole.

## COINS 21-22 ❑❑
Following Episode 2 as normal, you'll spray a stone switch to open up a vertical maze that you have to wall-jump. Zoom out the view and you'll see a blue coin in the maze. Carry on following the usual course, activate the second vertical maze and zoom out again to see a second blue coin in a cubbyhole above. A precise jump and hover will let you grab the edge.

## COINS 23-24 ❑❑
After defeating Gooper Blooper, drop down to the treasure cave but don't grab the Shine. Instead, squirt your nozzle at the vases in the walls for cash. The largest urns surrender blue coins.

## COINS 25-26 ❑❑
In Episode 6, two O symbols appear on opposite sides of the bay. We've proved it's possible to do this both ways, using just the boat if you set it up ready and you're really fast, but you might find it easier to go for the turbo nozzle on this level – it's in a niche by coin 16.

## COINS 27-30 ❑❑❑❑
In Episode 8, return to the sunken city where you met Eely Mouth. There are four blue coins on top of very tall pillars around the city, and you need to stay quite high to jet on top. Look for yellow coin rings on top of pillars too, as you'll need the oxygen.

# PIANTA VILLAGE




## COINS 1-4 ❑❑❑❑
As soon as you enter this world, turn around 180 degrees to see the first M signature. M 2 is on a wall below the fruit tree. M 3 is on a building between the big tree and the bridge. M 4 is hidden in the underside – you'll actually have to look for it on the ceiling.

## COIN 5 ❑
One coin is hidden in the tall grass down the left side of the village.

## COINS 6-7 ❑❑
There are two large trees at each corner of the left side of the village. Climb the trunks carefully to find blue coins.

## COINS 8-9 ❑❑
There are two triangle symbols in this world. One is on the wall around the hot spring, the other is on the right-hand side of the village.

## COINS 10-11 ❑❑
Go swimming for two coins in the river, one under the bridge, and one at the end.

## COIN 12 ❑
Some Piantas will tell you about the Mayor and Mayoress having a secret treasure stash. What you need to do is get on top of the golden mushroom, look up at the moon with the Y view, then start squirting the moon as if it was within reach. A blue coin will pop out!

## COINS 13-14 ❑❑
More M signatures appear in Episode 3. M 5 is on the wooden floor under the golden mushroom. Then start clearing away the fiery goop around the mushroom until you uncover M 6.

## COIN 15 ❑
Before leaving Episode 3, remember that you passed a burning Pianta when travelling around the right side of the village? He'll give you a blue coin for putting out the flames.

## COIN 16 ❑
Move on to Episode 5. How you could ever find this one without a guide is anyone's guess, but head to the hot spring and you'll notice that one end is actually a giant statue of a Pianta, arms raised. Stand on the Pianta's nose and butt-slam it to produce a hidden coin.

## COINS 17-18 ❑❑
There are two beehives for Yoshi to eat in Episode 5. One is under the tree by the hot spring, at the edge of the world. The other is above the rope bridge where you enter.

## COIN 19 ❑
Still with Yoshi, jump up onto the mushroom









that you find next to the fruit tree and look for a swarm of blue butterflies. Chomp, chomp, chomp.

**COIN 20** ☐
Squirt the water-hole in the big tree for a secret blue coin.

**COIN 21** ☐
In Episode 6, a signpost appears by the rope bridge. Hose it.

**COINS 22-29** ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
The challenge of Episode 6 is to find, rescue and wash down the gooped-up villagers. Eight of the ten will reward you with blueys. This isn't a bad task to repeat for 1-Ups.

**COIN 30** ☐
In Episode 8, a blue bird circles the fungus ledges high up in the big tree. Spin-jump up to the rocket nozzle and start your hunting…

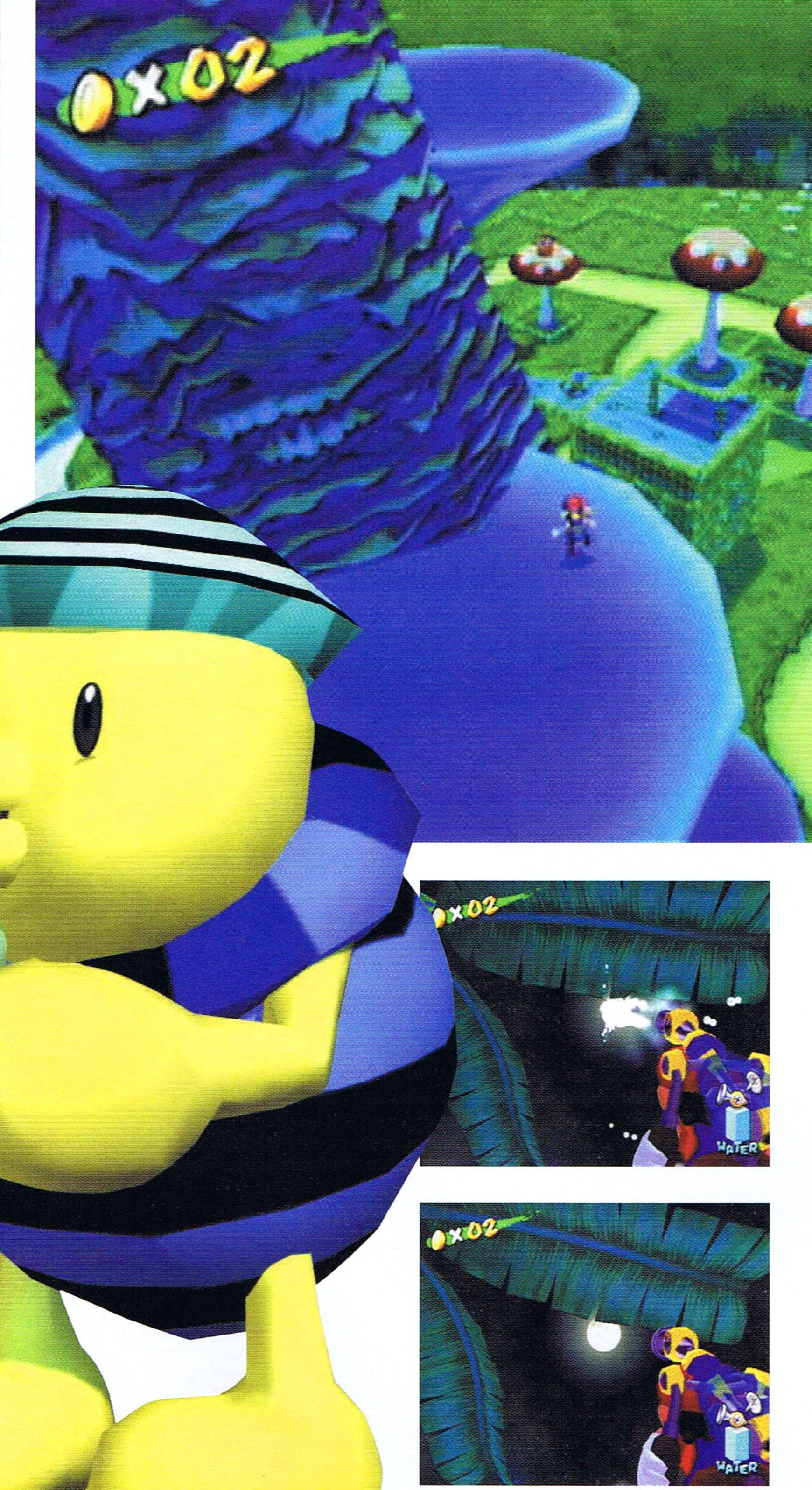


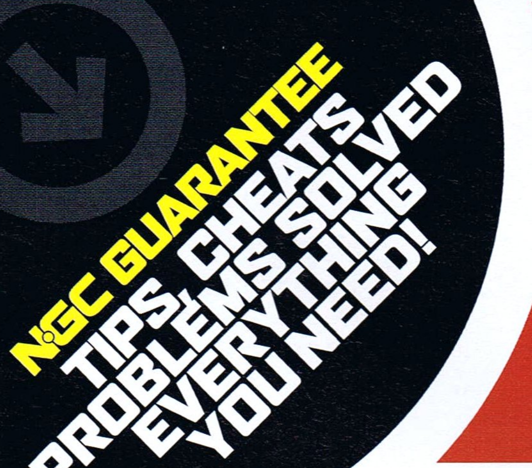


# CORONA MOUNTAIN

**COIN 1** ☐
The first blue coin stands proudly on display as your reward for crossing the spike and flame islands.

**COINS 2-10** ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
The last nine coins circle the final island, below the clouds that lead to the boss battle. The idea is to pilot the boat through the lava to collect them, but you'll sink if you so much as brush past a stalagmite. If that fails then you could try jumping out and hovering from the island, grabbing each one and saving before you die.






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THE TIPS YOU NEED FOR THE GAMES YOU'RE PLAYING...

# TIPS EXTRA

YOUR MOST WANTED TIPS

## MARIO SUNSHINE

### BOATING
After completing the game, go back to the clock tower where you first find Yoshi and you'll find that you can pay ten coins to hire a boat to take you back to the original airstrip where it all began!

### WATER JUICE
Hop onto your faithful dino-hound Yoshi immediately after spraying water on the ground and you'll see the water turn into juice. As if by some primitive form of magic.

### EASY 1-UP
There's a secret manhole which gives you an easy 1-Up mushroom near the shifty guy who sells you sunglasses (ie, near the tower that acts as a portal to Gelato Beach). Perform a ground pound about four feet in front of his mat to reveal it.

NGC READER KNOWLEDGE!

*If you complete Super Mario Sunshine then you'll get a colourful Hawaiian shirt for Mario to play in!*
*Sean Carter, Devon*

## DOSHIN THE GIANT

### MYSTERY MONUMENT
Build both Love and Hate versions of the first 15 monuments – and ensure they are all on the same save game – then destroy one of the existing monuments in the Monument Museum to unlock a bonus map and alien level.

### APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION
Normally, destroying a building or monument that you don't care for any more will cause your people to hate you. However, by slowly lowering it below sea level (ie, sinking it), then raising it back up you'll get rid of the architectural eyesore without irking your villagers.

NGC READER KNOWLEDGE!

*You can make the big guy fall asleep in Doshin The Giant by finding a flat piece of land and just leaving him alone for a bit!*
*Anne-Marie Payne, Bromley*

## SUPER MONKEY BALL 2

### GIFTS
After getting all of the Party Games a new option will appear in the Options menu. The new menu allows you to buy more lives, movies, or the Staff Credits game.

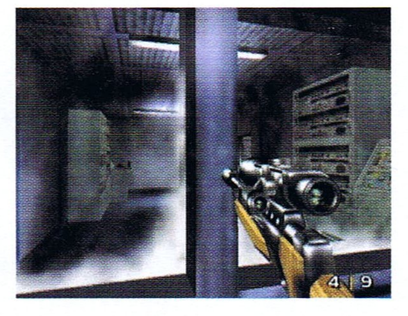
### EXTRA STAGES
Each of the three difficulty levels (Beginner, Advanced and Expert) have ten extra stages that can be accessed only by completing all of the normal stages without using a continue.

### MASTER MODE
To open the near-impossible Master Mode, all you have to do is complete the Expert levels, including the ten extra stages, without using a single continue. Easy, huh?

## TIME SPLITTERS 2

### SNAKE MINIGAME
Noticed those N64 cartridges hidden away in some of the levels? Well, pick them up then open them in the Temporal Uplink's secondary function to enjoy some secret minigames. For an annoying Snake-type game like the ones you get on mobile phones, head over to the west side of the dam on Siberia, then search out the area where there's fruit on the shelves.

### LUNAR LANDER MINIGAME
Skip forward to 2019 Neo Tokyo and search in the lockers on the right-hand side of the room with the machine gun and the lockers in it to play this ancient Atari title.



### RETRO RACER MINIGAME
In 2315's Robot Factory level, take a peek under one of the ramps next to the ramp with the armour underneath it to play this creaky overhead racer.

## SMUGGLER'S RUN

### HOVER SLED
Complete all of the smuggler's missions with a Great rating to unlock the slippy and zippy hover sled.

### NORTH AMERICA
To open up a new and bountiful land, all you need to do is make sure you pick up at least eight of the secret tokens that are scattered around the game's normal levels.

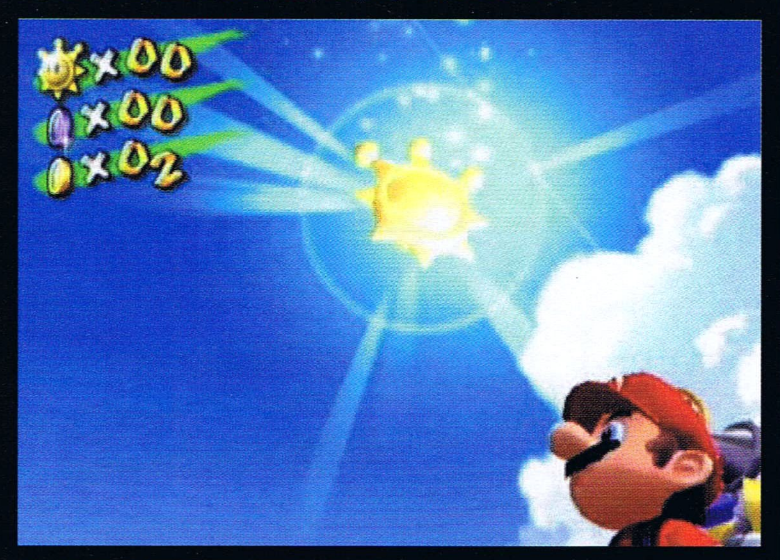
### FMV MOVIE
Come first in all 25 of the races in the checkpoint race menu and you'll unlock a bonus FMV movie to watch.





# READERS' TOP TEN TIPS

**Got a tip to top the month's list and win a game? Fill out the form overleaf and send it in. If not, sit down, eat yo' pizza, and shut up.**



## 1. MARIO SUNSHINE

### Easy lives

To get loads of lives unlock Sirena Beach, go to the first episode (Manta Storm), and find the two small natives covered in goop next to the pool on the right-hand side of the island. Spray them clean and you'll get two blue coins. Exit and re-enter the level – now each time you clean them you'll get two 1-Ups!

***Ross Bates, Somerset***

## 2. PIKMIN

**Gratuitous violence**

Even though red pikmin are the best at fighting, you can still use the A-button to make Captain Olimar attack those pesky garden enemies – useful if you're protecting your guys while they're carrying out tasks.

***Fergus Dawson, Belfast***

## 3. MARIO SUNSHINE

**Birds of a feather**

Hosing down differently coloured birds turns them into different items – green birds become coins, blue birds turn into blue coins and, best of all, yellow birds turn into shines!

***Janne Kaitila, Finland***

## 4. RESIDENT EVIL

**Like shooting fish…**

There's an easy way to get past the room full of crows. First, enter it and shoot one crow, then exit. When you go back in the others won't attack you. By doing this you can shoot them all like sitting ducks. Or crows.

***Dimitry Kekes, Greece***

## 5. SUPER MONKEY BALL

**Simian skip**

Once you've completed the game, it is possible to avoid having to go through the credits sequence. All you need to do is quickly press and hold down the A, B and Start buttons together.

***Chris Gardiner, Leicester***

## 6. SUPER SMASH BROS

**Monkey magic**

The easiest way to complete the 100-Man Melee is to play as Donkey Kong and just use his handslap (down and B) while standing still on the bottom platform. Neat, huh?

***Robert Jureniclz, Wales***

## 7. SONIC ADVENTURE 2

**Hard lovin'**

To turn a chao egg into an evil one, repeatedly throw it against a wall.

***Clark Mills, Cornwall***

## 8. SUPER MONKEY BALL

**Go bananas**

On Monkey Target, if you take off and then immediately land back on the ramp, you'll get a score of one!

***Danny Truter, Sheffield***
***Kyle Turner, Lancashire***

## 9. SUPER SMASH BROS

**Smashin' stuff**

On the Home Run contest, play as Roy, use a Smash attack, then charge up another while the bag is in the air – you should get at least 300m distance.

***Ian Fortune, Coventry***

## 10. MARIO SUNSHINE

**Parasol panache**

To get some certified cool shades, talk to the fat man with the umbrella after gaining 30 shines.

***Jamie Emberson, Essex***






# DR KITTS' GAME CLINIC

## Now available over the counter in all disreputable high-street pharmacies.

**Dr Kitts,**
Do you have any tips concerning the completion of the Endurance level in *Rogue Leader*? That particular level is causing me an unhealthy amount of mental unrest, which as you no doubt know, is not good for a modern young chap.
**Rich Locke, via email**

***Dr Kitts inadvertently infiltrates an Al'Qaeda cell…***
*Ah, 99 waves of dogfighting action like we used to do in the good old days! To set your mind at ease, you should fly in either the X-Wing or Naboo Starfighter, and follow this simple remedy: Fly right past the incoming wave until they're at the bottom of your radar, then turn around and take them out fast from behind. Then lather, rinse and repeat another 98 times.*

**Dr Kitts,**
I'm no golf nut myself, but I've become totally hooked on the *Super Monkey Ball* golf game! Unfortunately, though, I'm finding that my performance on holes 12 and 18 is really hindering my overall score. Any tips, doc?
**Simon Mason, Bournemouth**

***Dr Kitts insists on drinking only advocaat at his local public house…***
*For hole 12, you need to aim somewhere between the second bush from the left and the tree to have a chance of hitting the hole. As for that old final hole, number 18, you'll need to aim directly at the middle of the green and swing at 75 per cent on the 80-yard setting. This should see you make the green in a suitably Tiger Woods fashion. Speaking of whom, just what is all that Cablinasian guff about? We never had that in my day, you know.*

**Dr Kitts,**
I'll be brief like my underwear – how do I beat Event Match 50 on *Super Smash Bros*?
**Tomsonia, via email**

***Dr Kitts prescribes the ebola virus to his patients as a new remedy for the common cold…***
*I'll be curt with you, too. Play as Captain Falcon, and learn to rely on your Up and A Smash move as this can hit the hands without you having to jump. Also, take out the left hand first, as for some queer reason it has a tendency to occasionally sit there and do nothing at all.*









# CODE BANK

The one-stop game code shop for all you shameless cheats out there…

## TUROK EVOLUTION

To get some help with turning dinos into piles of meat, enter the following codes on the handily-named Cheat screen:

- TEXAS All weapons
- MADMAN Unlimited ammo
- HEID Big heads
- ZOO Zoo mode (kill all the animals!)
- HUNTER Play a target game on the title screen after the demo mode has finished (use D-pad to move and R to fire)
- EMERPUS Invincibility
- SLLEWGH Invisibility
- SELLOUT All chapters (load a save file then select any chapter)
- FMNFB All cheats

## GODZILLA

There's nothing wrong with giant monsters rampaging around in modern cities, and to get the most from this scaly showdown press and hold down L, B and R, then release B, R and L in that order. This should then open up a white cheat box into which you can enter the following codes:

- 443253 Removes energy and life bars
- 760611 To gain 11 continues in Adventure mode
- 176542 Shows the credits
- 661334 Turns on the Technicolor effect
- 696924 Unlock all monsters (except Orga)

## SMUGGLER'S RUN

Enter these codes to get the relevant effects:

- **Glass car** Left, Right, Z, Z, R
- **Infinite counter measures** – Press Y, Y, Y, X, X, Z, Z while the game is paused

The following special items are unlocked upon completing the following missions:

- Training 3 – Special Du Monde
- Mission 2 – Super Buggy Boost
- Mission 4 – Baja truck
- Mission 5 – Du Monde oil slick
- Mission 7 – Baja truck bombs
- Mission 9 – Vietnam
- Mission 10 – ATV monster
- Mission 11 – D-5 Hondo
- Mission 14 – ATV boost
- Mission 15 – Hondo oil slick
- Mission 18 – Sahara Special
- Mission 20 – Sahara smoke screen
- Mission 22 – Russian winter
- Mission 24 – Grenadier
- Mission 25 – Grenadier bombs
- Mission 27 – Kavostov half-track
- Mission 29 – Kavostov smoke screen
- Mission 36 – Dual-career counter measures

**NGC READER KNOWLEDGE!**

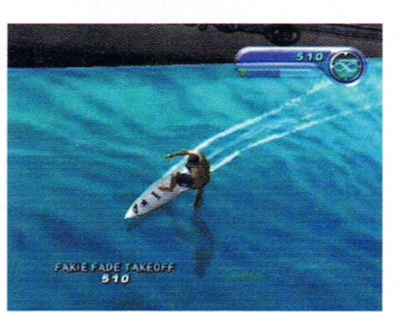
*If you manage to win a silver belt in UFC: Throwdown then you can use that character's face in career mode!*
*Alan Portnoy, Norwich*

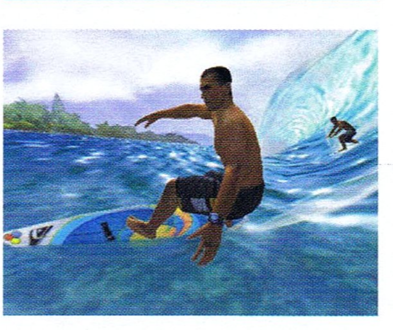



## KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER

Enter codes on, like, your cellphone and, like, get these cheats, dude. Simple, no?

- 6195554141 All beaches
- 3285554497 All levels
- 7025552918 All suits
- 9495556799 All surfers
- 6265556043 All tricks
- 8775553825 First-person view
- 3105556217 Freak
- 2175550217 High jumps
- 2125551776 Max stats
- 7145558092 Mega cheat
- 8005556292 Pastrana
- 2135555721 Perfect balance
- 8185555555 Rainbow
- 8885554506 Tiki God
- 3235559787 Tony Hawk
- 8185551447 Trippy






**YOUR TOP TIPS** Share the knowledge and bag yourself a prize…

**Found an interesting cheat, tip, secret or quirky thing in one of your games? Then send it into us immediately! Each month we'll stick the best into our Readers' Tips section. In return, if your tip is the number one readers' tip, we'll send you a Gamecube game of your choice. Sound good? Then don't hesitate – DO IT!**

## HERE'S MY TOP TIP…

**IT'S FOR**

**AND THIS IS HOW IT WORKS**



**Name** ........................................

**Address** ........................................

**Postcode** ........................................

*Send to:*
TIPS EXTRA, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW or e-mail ngc@futurenet.co.uk

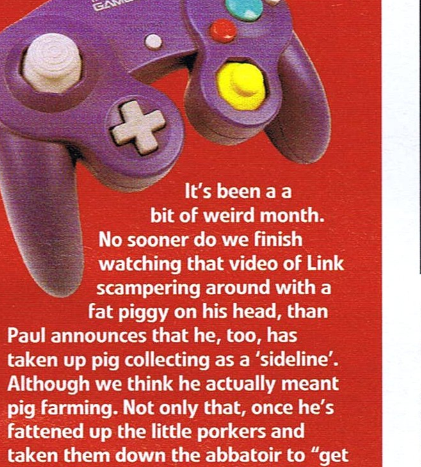
If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room.




in association with 


**YOU COULD BE A CONTENDER. YOU COULD BE SOMEBODY. INSTEAD OF A BUM, WHICH IS WHAT YOU ARE…**

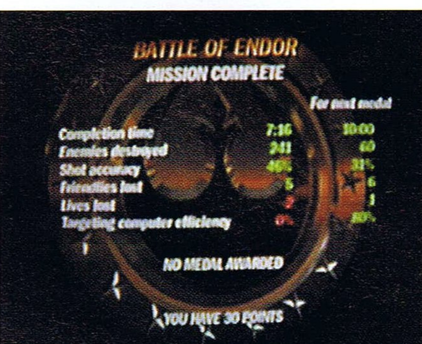
# I'M THE BEST




1

It's been a a bit of weird month. No sooner do we finish watching that video of Link scampering around with a fat piggy on his head, than Paul announces that he, too, has taken up pig collecting as a 'sideline'. Although we think he actually meant pig farming. Not only that, once he's fattened up the little porkers and taken them down the abbatoir to "get done", there will be "free bacon and ribs for all". The sole proviso for this meat-based generosity? That we pay him with "games, and other stuff".

But strong though our desire for flesh was, we did not budge. We have principles. Getting free games out of us lot takes more than agricultural bribery. No. It takes nothing less than a demonstration of PURE SKILL before we hand over even the most rubbish of games. Or the hundredweight of sausages slowly 'maturing' in the office as we speak. So – do you like pork? Get your entries in now, then.

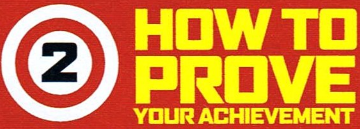





## STAR PERFORMANCE

Although somewhat frowned upon in real life, when it comes to games, the art of killing things is frequently – and perhaps worringly – an essential part of getting the high scores necessary to appear in these leagues.

And so the gong this month goes to **Kevin Ibbotson** of **Dublin**, whose proficiency at murdering has managed to elicit a score of 241 kills on the Battle of Endor level in *Rogue Leader*, within the space of seven minutes and 16 seconds. Sweet Jesus. That's over 30 Imperial pilots shot down in a hail of lasers every minute. Imperial pilots who had mothers, wives and brothers to mourn their passing. And pets. Hey, so they might have been working for the Empire, but they were only following orders from Emperor Palpatine – and they were still human beings. Well, probably. Anyway, Kevin reckons his efforts "more than deserve a free copy of *Timesplitters 2*." It's in the post, Kevin. Hope you're pleased with yourself.




When sending us evidence of your gaming achievements, it's useful to follow these steps…

### PHOTOGRAPHS

If you're sending us evidence of the photographic variety:

**1.** Turn off the camera's flash (or cover it up) to prevent it from reflecting off the screen.
**2.** Draw the curtains to eradicate sunlight.
**3.** Use a fast film (200 or 400 ASA).
**4.** If you're using a digicam then use a slower shutter speed.
**5.** Point at the screen and click away.

**PLEASE NOTE:** In the past we've had experience of certain scamps 'fiddling' with their photographic evidence, so this time round we're being extra-specially (is that right?) careful. We would, in fact, welcome video evidence over photographic evidence. If, however, you can only send photos, be warned: any doubts over the legality of your entry will lead to instant disqualification, and jeering.

### VIDEO

If you're going to be sending us the evidence that comes on a tape, follow these instructions carefully:

**1.** Plug the TV lead from the Gamecube into the Signal In socket of your video.
**2.** Connect the Signal Out socket on your video to your TV.
**3.** Find a spare channel on the video and search for the signal.
**4.** After completing and recording the challenge, rewind the tape and send it in.

NGC YOUR BEST PERFORMANCE

## 3 HERE'S MY BEST PERFORMANCE…

**MARIO SUNSHINE**
Best time on Il Piantissimo's Sand Sprint ……………
Best time on Il Piantissimo's Crazy Climb ……………

**TIMESPLITTERS 2**
Highest score in Behead the Undead ……………
Best time in Pane in the Neck ……………
Best time in Escape from Neo Tokyo ……………

**LUIGI'S MANSION**
Total number of Gs ……………
Time taken to beat final boss ……………

**ROGUE LEADER**
Battle of Endor kills ……………
Death Star Attack accuracy ……………
Star Destroyer fastest time ……………

**WAVE RACE**
Aspen Lake best race time ……………
Lost Temple Lagoon stunt score ……………
Southern Island lap time ……………

**SUPER SMASH BROS**
Highest score in Home Run ……………
Highest juggle combo ……………
Quickest time in 100-man melee ……………

**SONIC 2**
Juggernaut Level number of rings ……………
Escape from the Military Base best time ……………

**TONY HAWK'S 3**
The Foundry highest score ……………
Canada highest trick combo ……………
Rio highest score ……………

**CRAZY TAXI**
Ten-Minute Mode most money ……………
Crazy Jump longest jump ……………
Crazy Drift combo ……………

**SUPER MONKEY BALL**
Fastest time on Frozen Highway ……………
Highest score on Monkey Target ……………
Fastest time on Advanced Floor 2 ……………

**Name** ……………

**Address** ……………

**Postcode** ……………

*Send to:*
I'M THE BEST, **NGC** Magazine,
30 Monmouth Street,
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If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room. Or just write with something other than finger-paints.

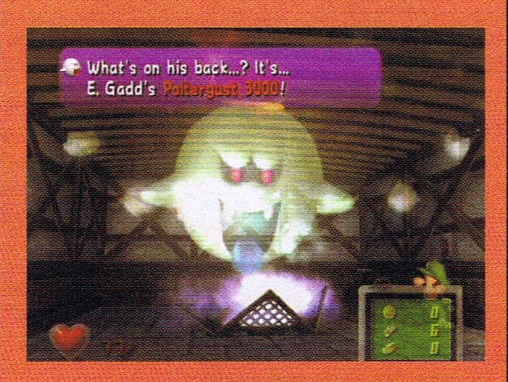
## LUIGI'S MANSION





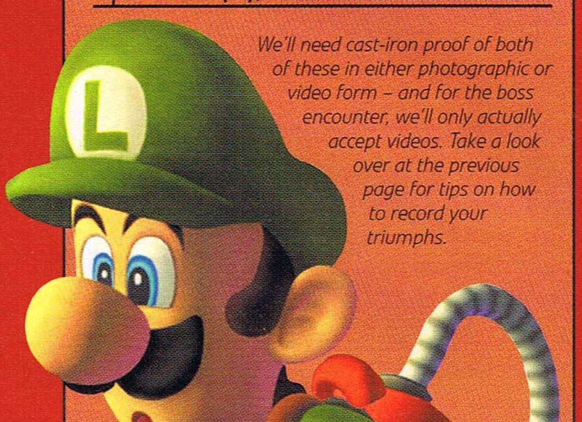
**See how many Gs you can notch up at the end of the game.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Sean Hinton, Kidderminster | 185,710,000G |
| 2 | John Dawson, Hull | 185,280,000G |
| 3 | Daniel Mitchell, East Sussex | 184,440,000G |
| 4 | Jamie Butters, East Sussex | 184,060,000G |
| 5 | Mark Richardson, Leeds | 183,575,000G |




**See how long it takes you to dispose of the final boss.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Tim Wingate, Tyne & Wear | 122 secs |
| 2 | Grover Mitchell, Newport | 139 secs |
| 3 | Alex Gough, Rochdale | 142 secs |
| 4 | Jonathan Bisaby, Leicester | 144 secs |
| 5 | Kelvin Murphy, Taunton | 151 secs |



*We'll need cast-iron proof of both of these in either photographic or video form – and for the boss encounter, we'll only actually accept videos. Take a look over at the previous page for tips on how to record your triumphs.*

## STAR WARS: ROGUE LEADER



**Most kills on Battle of Endor (you must win at least a Bronze medal).**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Kevin Ibbotson, Dublin | 241 |
| 2 | Adam Goodwin, Anglesey | 204 |
| 3 | Joe Newman, London | 191 |
| 4 | David Gamble, Antrim | 175 |
| 5 | Hal Elston, Bristol | 173 |



**Highest accuracy on Death Star Attack (video evidence only, please).**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Kieran Cornwell, London | 93% |
| 2 | Chris Fletcher, Stockport | 86% |
| 3 | Jack Gill, Northallerton | 83% |
| 4 | Anthony Musson, Preston | 82% |
| 5 | Thomas Scoffham, Nuneaton | 80% |

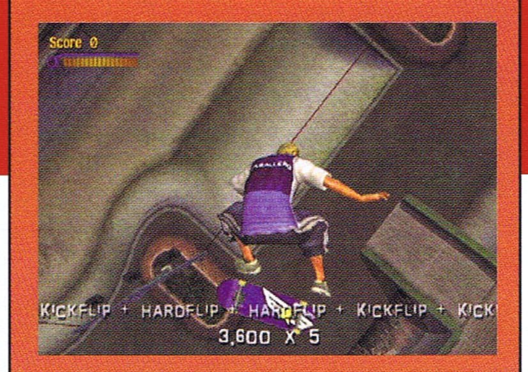
**Fastest time achieved taking out the Star Destroyer in Razor Rendezvous.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Simon Thomas, Solihull | 0:22 |
| 2 | Paul Bowers, Wolverhampton | 0:32 |
| = | Gavin Maidment, Surrey | 0:32 |
| 4 | Stephen Rebel, Netherlands | 0:35 |
| = | Martÿn Heule, Netherlands | 0:35 |

*On Death Star Attack, we don't want to see you shoot three TIEs with homing torpedoes for 100 per cent accuracy – that's for maggots. We want to see video footage of REAL skill. Pics are fine for the other two.*

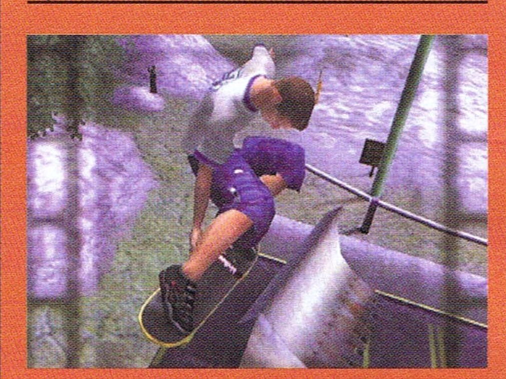
## TONY HAWK'S 3






**Highest point score on The Foundry level.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Andrew Nizinskyj, Barnsley | 8,436,013 |
| 2 | John Copeland, Co Durham | 4,203,016 |
| 3 | David Peacock, Co Durham | 3,886,325 |
| 4 | Mickey Ieronymides, St Albans | 3,255,466 |
| 5 | Chris Hepworth, Pontefract | 2,691,264 |



**Highest trick combo on the Canada level.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Andrew Nizinskyj, Barnsley | 7,002,912 |
| 2 | David Peacock, Co Durham | 3,886,325 |
| 3 | Gary Lord, Hull | 2,173,200 |
| 4 | John Copeland, Co Durham | 1,879,038 |
| 5 | Kieran Cornwell, London | 1,589,816 |

**Highest score on the Rio level.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Andrew Nizinskyj, Barnsley | 4,225,882 |
| 2 | Mickey Ieronymides, St Albans | 4,225,882 |
| 3 | David Bennett, Isle of Man | 4,095,129 |
| 4 | Andrew Cooper, Surrey | 3,786,550 |
| 5 | John Copeland, Co Durham | 3,283,355 |

*Remember, Tony Hawk's 3 is blinkin' hard, so you'll need to put in the hours – once you have, get us your proof of the end screen in either photographic or, preferably, videographic form. Ta very much.*

**SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO:** I'M THE BEST, NGC MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

## WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM




**Your best race time on Aspen Lake in Normal mode.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Paul Holmes, Edinburgh | 0'21"144 |
| 2 | Daniel Dunn, Boston | 1'01"633 |
| 3 | Frantzeskakis Dimitris, Greece | 1'03"930 |
| 4 | Robert Watson, Renfrewshire | 1'04"176 |
| 5 | Dave Every, Cheshire | 1'04"329 |




**Your best stunt score on Lost Temple Lagoon.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Steven Lockwood, Bradford | 35,545 |
| 2 | Ben Tatlow, London | 33,160 |
| 3 | Jon East, Manchester | 26,254 |
| 4 | Frantzeskakis Dimitris, Greece | 11,019 |
| 5 | John Copeland, Co Durham | 10,624 |

**Your best lap time on Southern Island in Normal mode.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Daniel Dunn, Boston | 0'16"587 |
| 2 | Andrew Cooper, Surrey | 0'18"712 |
| 3 | Benjamin Hayes, Berkshire | 0'18"799 |
| 4 | Dave Every, Cheshire | 0'18"926 |
| 5 | Frantzeskakis Dimitris, Greece | 0'19"679 |

*Fancy some? Again, we'll need cast-iron proof of your achievements – video is our choice medium, although we may also accept some photographic evidence, provided – of course – that it hasn't been altered or messed with in some way.*

## CRAZY TAXI




**How much money you can nab in the Ten Minute Mode.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Alistair Kendall, Bristol | $12,340 |
| 2 | Billy Keach, Essex | $11,693 |
| 3 | Steven McKeon, Middlesex | $9,875 |
| 4 | Phil Sturgeon, Bristol | $9,822 |
| 5 | Karl Davies, Lanarkshire | $9,520 |




**What your longest jump in Crazy Jump is.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Andrew Cooper, Surrey | 381.95m |
| 2 | Thomas Sherwood, Cheshire | 356.25m |
| 3 | Alistair Kendall, Bristol | 351.63m |
| 4 | Jonny Elstree, Nottingham | 346.98m |
| 5 | Billy Keach, Essex | 339.81m |

**What's your highest Crazy Drift combo?**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Andrew Cooper, Surrey | 109 |
| 2 | Anthony Henderson, Manchester | 58 |
| 3 | Mark Grafton, Ayrshire | 31 |
| 4 | Billy Keach, Essex | 19 |
| 5 | Steven McKeon & Nicky Day | 17 |

*For this one, we'll accept photographic or video evidence, but we won't accept 'fiddled-with' photos and we won't accept bribes, either. You know who you are... Well, on second thoughts, it depends how much you're offering.*

## SONIC ADVENTURE 2





**How many rings you can get at the end of the Juggernaut chase section.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | William Thomas, Shropshire | 440 |
| 2 | Adam Ely, Weybridge | 437 |
| 3 | Robert McGuire, Co Dublin | 334 |
| 4 | Steven McKeon, Middlesex | 307 |
| 5 | Jason Roberts, Stockport | 87 |



**What time you can notch up on Escape from the Military Base.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Barry Templeton, Kilmarnock | 01:43:57 |
| 2 | Thomas Sherwood, Cheshire | 01:44:00 |
| 3 | Sam Ely, Weybridge | 01:45:90 |
| 4 | Nicholas Gill, Exeter | 01:47:59 |
| 5 | Jason Roberts, Stockport | 01:51:43 |

*Only the fastest need apply for this challenge. And we'll need video evidence for both of these beauties, too.*





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Send your message to 86188 starting with NGC_. Calls cost 25p plus network tariff per text.*

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Same goes for the old mail. Get us at ngc@futurenet.co.uk right now!

*Your text number may used in other Future Publishing promotions, including exclusive news and competitions from Future Games. Neato.

## STAR LETTER

**WIN YOURSELF A BRAND-NEW GAMECUBE GAME!**

### 'That extra something'

I can barely describe how worried I am about Nintendo and how they treat the European market. Granted, I know Ninty's full list of reasons for selling off Rare, but it is a fact that Rare kept the N64 alive with top-quality games. I'm so worried in fact, that I'm actually considering buying an Xbox just so I can play games such as *Perfect Dark* and *Conker*. If I do, then it's obvious – Microsoft has succeeded, and they will increase their user base in Europe and America by quite a considerable amount. I've already heard of people selling their Cubes online so they can get an Xbox. This, personally, I don't agree with. The Gamecube has tons of must-have titles on the way, all of which make owning a Cube worthwhile, but there is still something about missing those Rare games. *Perfect Dark* was without a doubt my favourite FPS, and now, even with great games like *Die Hard: Vendetta* and *Metroid Prime*, I just know I'll miss that extra something if I don't buy an Xbox right now. I really do believe Nintendo should have thought more about its fans and users, and not their profits (which they are making enough of anyway).
***Pierce Ward, via email***

***Hopefully, the money generated from the Rare sale will see some cheaper development studios snapped up, and other such investments, meaning more new and unique games – which is surely good news. Although having said that, the huge fine Ninty was recently slapped with might have dented the piggy bank a bit. But, you know, consoles are getting so cheap nowadays that people will probably end up owning more than one, meaning that everyone gets the best of all possible worlds. Ed***

### 'Back in the box'

Thank God Blockbuster have a games rental system or I would have wasted £45 on *Resident Evil*. Did any of you play it? You completely brushed over the control system, a major flaw which ruined the game completely. In less than an hour it went back in the box and back to Blockbuster. Why release this game? Why not wait for a new *RE* game? A control system like this is not acceptable any more, full stop. This smells of hype because it IS hype. You owe your readers much more than this. Don't give us the hype just because the Cube somehow needs some more gore games. I am disappointed and I am beginning to wonder if you lot understand Nintendo videogames!
***Martin, Cheshire***

***Firstly, if you played the game for less than an hour, you're not qualified to comment on on it. Did you give it a chance? Did you try to get on with the controls? If you had, you might have found the Type C option a satisfactory substitute for true analogue control. We addressed this issue significantly in the review – which you appear not to have read properly – and, along with the other problems with the game, it was the reason the PAL score dropped 4 per cent from the import review. Nevertheless, the game is magnificently entertaining and atmospheric, and ultimately great fun. There's no agenda or 'hype' here. And frankly, we couldn't give a monkey's bassoon about the Cube needing more 'gore games', as gore doesn't make a game. Just ask Mario. Ed***

### 'Play great games'

I thought I would write and let you know about something cool which happened yesterday. I was in ePlay in Bath asking about release dates. The guy serving then asked me had I played *Resi Evil* yet, and we then got into a very excitable conversation about how cool the game was. We were then joined by about five or six other guys who all proceeded to shout out their favourite bits, very loudly! I can't say I've ever heard anyone chatting loudly about Sony's latest *Straight to Platinum 5: Curse of the Lazy Developer* game. I think this is why I have stuck by Nintendo all these years. While other consoles are trying to reach for an online gaming community, Nintendo already has a well-established gaming community – just people who play great games and love to talk about them.
***Les Johnson, via email***

***Bless. Ed***

## Bonus Letters

My brother's auntie is Yvette Fielding from Blue Peter.
Andy Pallett, Cheshire
***Does that mean she's your auntie, too? Ed***

Who cares how big his head is, he's a computer game character.
Harry Rowe, Kenley
***If only the same could be said in real life. Ed***

So you finally assassinated Weaver – he was getting annoying.
***We killed him in his sleep. Ed***

Joanna could have suction cups on her hands and knees.
Richard Mai, Billinge
***Both practical and attractive. Ed***

I bet you can't find anything funny to say about grapes.
Anonymous, Derbyshire
***Ah, well that's where you'd be wrong. Ed***

### 'Human racers'

Reading your *F-Zero GC* preview in the Ultimate Gamecube Companion book, I was wondering how Triforce/Gamecube connectivity would work. The answer is simple… What if all the people you're facing on the Triforce version of *F-Zero* weren't CPU controlled, but were in fact human racers, playing at home on their Gamecubes? This would be revolutionary – it could also be why games such as *Mario Kart GC* are so tightly under wraps; the game is probably almost finished but Nintendo want to see how *F-Zero* does with a setup like this first.
***Richard Carter, Purley***

***Interesting theory, and it's the most likely scenario, we reckon. Certainly, some kind of online link-up would seem to be the most obvious way that the two versions of F-Zero will interact – we can't see people taking their Cubes into an arcade, for instance. Then again, it might be a whole lot simpler than this – imagine being able to design your own vehicle, save it onto a memory card and then load it into the Triforce machine at the arcade. Ed***

**URTXTS**

My granny wants TUROK for Xmas! Dave ▪ Marry me Paul! I love UR hair xxx... Anon ▪ Mario is Wario! Blind Bazza X

### 'Useless at it'

While perusing your excellent issue 73 I stumbled across the *UFC Throwdown* review. In that article you wrote "Recognise them, do you? WELL, DO YOU?! Nope, nor


© Kobal

△ **Favreau: not, in actual fact, any good at fighting.**


**HONOURABLE MENTIONS**
Thanks to everyone else who wrote, emailed and texted us this month.

You included: Johnny Crouch, Crowland; Sandra Mathieson, Peterborough; Joanne Kneebone, Cornwall; S. Milan, Suffolk; Terry Ashby, Stevenage; Mark Summie, Tunbridge Wells; David Aubrey, Redditch; Robin Bradley, Basingstoke; Rory Collins, Kingsbury; Dan Barnett, Bradford; James Youngman, Norfolk; David Gregory, Greenwich; Tom Phillips, Shepperton; Rob Scorgie, Warminster; Chris King, Lancs; Simon Dawes, Chorleywood; Brendan Coopey, Caldicot; Tiarnan McNulty, Northern Ireland; Cia Cardenas, via email; Robert Burrows, Stanmore; James Jennings, Great Chishill; Thomas Valorsa, London; Michael Wickham, Ealing;

us," under one of the screenshots. Despite not being a UFC know-all (or know-anything), I did recognise Pete Williams. He was, unless I am very much mistaken, the same Pete who went out with Monica a few series ago in Friends. They then broke up because he – wait for it – joined the UFC and was useless at it. Now that I have finished annoying you, thanks for a great read every month.
***Tom Glibbery, via email***

***Iiiiiiinteresting. However,the character in Friends was played by Swingers actor John Favreau – and the chap you mention in the* UFC *review isn't him (despite looking quite similar). Presumably, however, Pete Williams is an actual* UFC *superstar. Although we're blowed if we know.* Ed**

## 'Total percentage'

When I was flicking through issue 73, I took a quick look at the review for *Mickey's Magical Mirror* and laughed at the words, but when I looked at the score it had been given I was a bit confused. I added them up and divided them by 40 – the maximum it could have got if each category got straight 10s – to give a total percentage from the four scores it had been given (*Haven't you forgotten to multiply by 100? – Smug Ed*). This came to 60 per cent. Now, I know this isn't how you derive your



final score, but the difference between the 26 per cent it was awarded and 60 is a bit of a cruel one. Don't get me wrong, I have no love for the mouse, it's just that I don't think the score it was given was justice.
***Kyle Pedley, via email***

***As you say, the percentage we give a game isn't drawn directly from the various scores it gets, so it's not useful to take an average of them. Those four categories – Visuals, Sounds, Mastery and Lifespan – are indicators of four recognisable aspects of each game, and are useful for immediately ascertaining a feel for those specific elements. But there's much more to a game than those parts, however – what kind of challenge does the game offer? Is it a new and original experience? An old and tired one? And so on – they don't represent the 'bigger picture', so to speak.* Mickey *might look great and sound okay, but as a game, it's a disaster. If you'd played it, I think you'd agree that we were being generous…***

## 'Dirty mitts'

Has anyone else noticed the new fashionable trend of releasing multi-format games first on Xbox and PS2, then later on the Cube? "**NGC**," I cry in frustration. "Why are companies doing this?" I first noticed this 'trend' with *Turok Evolution*, for which the Cube version was released nearly a month after the Xbox and PS2 versions. And what did they use the extra month for? Slow loading times and a game more prone to crashing than any other Gamecube title I own (including *Rogue Leader*). Now *Timesplitters 2* follows the trend, with the Cube version being released two weeks after other console owners get their dirty mitts on a copy. Why? I think I know. The bigwigs in the games industry offices want to put out as much product as possible, but their factories can only churn out so many games. The head of department says: "one console will have to wait a few weeks. Who's used to the most delays?" And we can't blame them. Most big Nintendo titles for the past five years have been delayed (think *Zelda, Perfect Dark*, etcetera), and even the Gamecube itself took an age to get across to Europe.
***Alex Blyth, via email***

***We don't think it's quite as personal as that – it's just that Gamecube discs, being proprietary storage systems of a unique size, are trickier to make. Indeed, Nintendo themselves manufacture, say,* Timesplitters 2*, not Eidos. This would be the reason behind delays for multi-format Cube games.* Ed**

James Banks, Dorset; Chris Storey, Sheffield; Nathan Cass, Farnborough; Ian Gough, Hereford; Mats Alexander, Norway; Michael Luckett, via email; Christo Bristow, via email; Tom Derrick, via email; Kev Mitchell, via email; Ollie Pin, via email; Gan Deary the Gruel Box Monitor; A. Harding, via email; Jos Antens, the Netherlands.

### Bonus Letters

Can you please tell Kittsy to give me my left arm back.
Jonathan Matthews, via email
***Sorry. He's already eaten it with some fava beans and a fine Chianti. Fthhffththththth. Fth. Ed***

It's not difficult to realise who the god of the videogames is. It is… Gex!
'Lord Melkior', via email
***It could be worse. Couldn't it? Ed***

It doesn't matter if it lasts 16 years, 18 months… or three minutes!
Simon Mason, Bournemouth
***Glad you understand. Ed***

After a pretty fiery exchange of views, the Japanese tourists saw it my way and left my garden.
Gary Cocker, Dundee
***Hoe hoe! Um. Ed***

Rare = blob with no brains.
Miko Rumsby, via email
***Now now. Ed***

You are fools and you are folks; therefore you are foolks.
David Townrow, via email
***Whatever you say, manron. Ha!***

### URTXTS

Destroy al monkeys! DESTROY! VQ ▪ Make bread not war - Mad Frankie F ▪ I m nt a number, I M a BRIE MAN!!! Josef K, Motown

## 'Have been magic'

There seems to be a big hang-up regarding how many hours of gameplay you will get per game. How can this be measured? I for one am still playing and enjoying *Zelda 64*, having just reached Ganondorf's castle. I've owned this game from the day it was released, but with other lifestyle commitments I cant always spend as much time as I'd like with my 64, an argument my wife is using against any purchase of a Gamecube. But the hours spent on this game have been magic and far exceed the stated figures. Does this make me a poor gamer or a realistic gamer?
***Richard Blenkinsop, via email***

***If indeed you are only about to finish* Ocarina of Time *after almost four years, then you've certainly got some amazing value-for-money out of the game. You're not a poor gamer at all – some people take great pride in being the first to finish a certain game, and obviously have more free time to play them, but it's the journey that's the thing, not the destination. Whether a game lasts you five or fifty hours, we've always said that it's not the length of time, but the enjoyment you get out of it, that counts.* Ed**

## 'Output rate'

There are a lot of people deeply upset by the purchase of Rare by Microsoft. But we should look at it from another angle. Rare were responsible for a very small percentage of all titles released on the N64 – only nine games in six years! *Blast Corps* was their only truly original title, and one original title does not an innovative company make. Joanna Dark's new look makes me laugh out loud – she's become the embodiment of the 'kiddy' characters Xboxers constantly yak about not having on their console.

I have also noticed that some Nintendo fans are talking of purchasing an Xbox to play Rare's games. What poppycock. If they were to buy an Xbox for all the other developers I'd understand, but just Rare alone? It's ridiculous if their output rate remains as bad as it currently is.
***Luke Fletcher, via email***



△ **Every time *Turok Evolution* loads new scenery, monkeys appear to distract you until it's done. Honest.**




To err is human, to admit it divine. Errrrrrrrrrrrrrr…

I was appalled to find you had made not one, not three, but two mistakes in issue 73. The first is in Essentials, where the picture of the truly wonderful *Mario Sunshine* is replaced by a Pichu! A PICHU! And on top of that in So Tell Me This… your reply to Allesandro Shepheard replaced a four with a five. WHY DO I SHARE THE EARTH WITH SUCH INCOMPETENT FOOLS?
***Pete Millwood, via email***




***The biggest incompetent fool here has a name that sounds like 'Man Weary'. Poltroon. Ed***

In **NGC**/73, You put Debating' instead of 'Debating' as a header for one of the letter on page 107. Then in the So Tell Me This… section of page 108, you called Microsoft "Mocrosoft". Idiots.
***Mark Johnson, Hampshire***

***Ah well, that's all correct in Dan's native Ireland. (Um, is that convincing?) Ed***

# Grintendo!

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*THIS MONTH:* DARREN WHYTE OF PORTLETHEN

NGC SPECIAL GUEST CHRISTOPHER LEE in The Wicker Man!

WRITE TO... GRINTENDO/MAILBOX/NGC/30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW/OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK






**Unsuccessful!** YOUR ABYSMAL JOKE HAS AFRIGHTED MY HAIR – FOR THIS YOU MUST BURN IN THE WICKER MAN'S BELLY, TO APPEASE THE HARVEST GOD. TODDLE-OO!

## URTXTS

Why is Geraint so small? Rich ▪ SHIGGY is the LORD OF MADRINOT! Bruce V ▪ I LIKE Cheese and BreAD Alan Disco ▪

***While it's certainly heartening to see that some people understand that Rare's divorce from Nintendo doesn't spell doom for the Gamecube, we do think you're selling Rare a bit short here. Sure, a lot of their games weren't terribly original, but they were hugely polished and tremendously good fun. Apart from* Mickey's Speedway USA*, that is.* Ed**

## 'Friend help you'

Recently I have noticed that most multiplayer games no longer have a co-operative option. I remember back in the days of the SNES that I invited my friend over and had a great time trying to complete my games. The only new game I have noticed that has a co-operative mode is *Halo* on the Xbox. I believe having a friend help you out in a game is much better than fighting over who's the best. I hope developers start to include this option again. It would make games much more enjoyable.
***Gordon Wallace, via email***

△ Geary and Bickham play *TS2*, brotherly-style. Aaaah.

***We know exactly what you mean. Remember* Zombies Ate My Neighbour*? Lovely. And despite the stuttering frame-rate,* Perfect Dark*'s co-op mode was a great laugh too. Anyway, you're in luck – the magnificent* Timesplitters 2 *– which we reviewed in issue 73, if you remember – features a rather dandy co-operative mode. Hopefully, this will persuade other developers to include similar options in future titles. Fingers crossed, eh?* Ed**

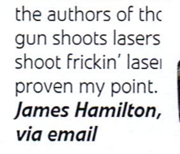
## 'Page comes up'

I was playing the old classics *GoldenEye* and *Perfect Dark* and was wondering when you finish a mission and the page comes up with the account of where all your shots went, there are Head, Limbs, Body and Other categories. What exactly does Other refer to? Where do you have to hit someone to get an Other shot?
***Anna Mary Townsend, via email***

***Er, how to put this? Well, you know you can shoot, say, scientists in, for example, the posterior? Things like that. Um.* Ed**

## 'Frickin' laser beams?'

There have been at least two letters in the Mailbox of previous issues saying that Fox's gun in *Super Smash Bros Melee* is either a Beretta or a Glock. Can I just ask the authors of th[e] gun shoots lasers shoot frickin' lase[r] proven my point.
***James Hamilton, via email***





## SO TELL ME THIS...

**Forbidden knowledge revealed! If by forbidden you mean available.**

Is *Burnout 2: Point of Impact* coming to Gamecube, since it's on the PS2?
***Richard Lecutier, Nottingham***

***Burnout 2 is currently a 'PS2 exclusive', so at the time of writing, the answer is technically no. However, the game was originally going to be on the Cube anyway – in all probability this means that the game is simply going to be 'exclusive' on the PS2 for a certain amount of time. We'd expect to see both Gamecube and Xbox versions of the title early next year.***

1. What is the UK release date for *Animal Crossing*?
2. When is *Freekstyle* coming out over here?
3. What is the UK release date for *Mario Tennis GC*?

***Maurik and Jarmo Willemse***

***1. Currently, the game does not have a UK release date. However, it was recently confirmed that Australia – a PAL territory – would get the game, so we live in hope. The biggest obstacle we can think of to its release is that it'll take a lot of work to translate it into however-many-languages for Europe. That, and the fact that it's a pretty quirky game. Easter/Summer, we reckon.***
***2. It's been out for ages – pop down to your local store to find it. (It's not very good, mind).***
***3.* Mario Tennis GC *doesn't even have a Japanese or US release date yet, unfortunately.***

1. Now that Rare have gone to Xbox, what's gonna happen to *Conker's Bad Fur Day*?
2. Is there any news of an Indiana Jones game coming to the Cube?
3. Are you guys sure that *Evil Dead* isn't coming to the Cube? I heard a rumour that it was being ported from the PS2.
***Daniel Cooke, Ireland***

***1. Conker is now Xbox-only. He took a starring role in the 'Rare on Xbox' movie that was presented at X02.***
***2. No news yet. But* Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb *is coming to Xbox so a port might be likely. The eventual non-release of the N64* Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine *goes against it, though.***
***3. Nothing official has been said – so it's still just a rumour.***

1. What happened to *Shadowman 2* coming to the Cube?
2. What are the chances of *Tekken* coming to the Cube?
3. Is *D.O.A.* coming to the Cube?
4. Will THQ ever produce a decent wrestling game? Ever?
***Mick, Surrey***

***1. Well, the game didn't do very well on the PS2, so Acclaim probably cut their losses and decided not to do a GC version. Truth be known, it wasn't brilliant, either – less atmospheric than the first and relying a touch too much on combat and featureless corridors. Nice exteriors, though.***
***2. In these days of Microsoft buying Rare and Capcom developing for Nintendo, anything's possible. But at the moment, no.***
***3. Ditto.***
***4. That's not very nice, is it?***




Oh, have we got plenty of good stuff in store for you…

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# TALK TIME

So what's it like to work for Nintendo? We collared former **NGC** stalwart Greener, who was only too pleased to compile this online diary…



△ Greener, with his new 'friends'. Not quite as attractive as his old friends, we'd like to think.



## WHO IS... MARK GREEN

Greener was **NGC**'s phone-destroying, hoover-box-having deputy editor until issue 67. After packing his worldly stuff into a hankie tied to a stick, he left to join Nintendo of Europe's team in Grossostheim, near Frankfurt. He's now their online editor, devising content for assorted Nintendo websites.

**8.00AM**
*Alarm. Shower. Bus to the big white Nintendo building – currently with four big cardboard Yoshis staring out of the windows of its various floors, and counting. Plus a Smurf, for some long-forgotten reason.*

**9.00AM**
*Still half-asleep, so it's brain-free internet surfing time! Or, if my bosses are reading this, knuckling down for a period of concentrated studying of new press releases, marketing info, release schedules, etc. Check the Community Forums on the Nintendo site to 'catch' the 'buzz'. Also: daily 'air conditioning on or off?' office bickering begins. I also have German lessons twice a week, which happens around this time. Ich habe viel gelernen! I think.*

**10.00AM**
*The cry of "meeting!" goes up like a bugle horn, and we roll our chairs – yes, castored chairs, no expense spared here! – into the meeting room for our news conflab. The whole team sit around to cogitate, digest and deliberate to develop some tasty news for the site – and dream up new ideas to make ours the bestest Nintendo site ever. We'll also liaise with the Product Analysis team across the corridor, who tell us what screenshots and movies they can deliver. And which top-secret games they wouldn't be able to show us without calling in the Nintendo Sniper afterwards.*

**10.30AM**
*With the news settled on, me and Rick, the other online editor, hammer the big taps into our brains and wait for the words to spill out. How long I write depends on the type of news – short stories don't take long, but our game reviews take time, because I need to 'bone up' on the game in question by playing it. And, you know, sitting there, Wavebird in hand, plugging through the latest Nintendo games – that's hard work. I'll also chat to our lovely online designer, Sandy, about what images we need her to create to sit alongside the news.*

**12.00PM**
*Lunchtime, and it's everyone into the NoE canteen – which has been recently refurbished with a startling taxidermy theme, so you get a stuffed fox bearing down on you as you fill your salad bowl. Lunchtime multiplayer game of choice: Mario Tennis on Nintendo 64. I play as Daisy, and still can't lob properly.*

**1.00PM**
*More writing. I'm likely to be handed some texts to check, and there's a hugely varied selection of it, too. Press releases, marketing materials, 100,000-word Player's Guides that we'll give to anyone registering the relevant game on the site, and which are so long they leave an impression of the monitor burned on my eyeball after I've finished checking them.*

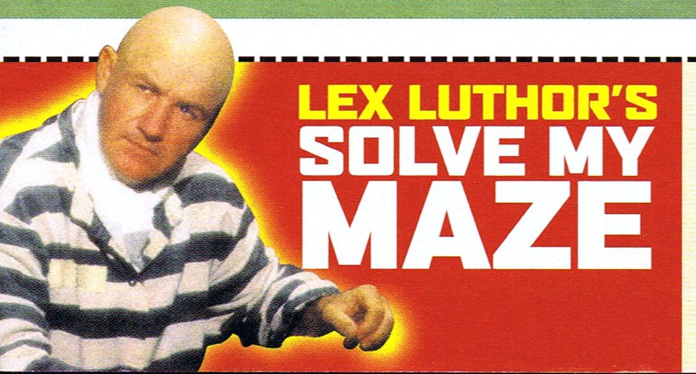
**2.00PM**
*The time is ripe for another meeting – perhaps an advanced chat about potential news stories for next week, maybe a fancy conference call with our internet agencies in Amsterdam and Vancouver to discuss some cool new features for the site, or a quick meeting with the PA guys to work out what we should post on the site next, based on the big box o' games the postie's just dropped through the letterbox. Or maybe just a quiet word with Rick about the ins and outs of lobbing in Mario Tennis.*

**3.00PM**
*Most of what we need to write today will be finished by now, so our job now is to deliver it to a translation agency, who spit it back out in German, French, Spanish, Italian and Dutch faster than you can say, "Wie komme ich am besten zum bahnhof, bitte?" After it comes back, we'll pass it on to our local subsidiaries (Nintendo UK, Nintendo France, and so on), who check, change and approve the text, removing my dispiriting struggles with the concept of 'humour' wherever appropriate. Because of all these different steps, agencies and subsidiaries, there's a ton of text passing through our office at any one time – our online administrators Steve and Ollie, keep track of it all, and need me and Rick to be super-organised in when and how we deliver texts. We keep lots of complicated coloured charts precisely because of this. And also because I really like colouring in.*

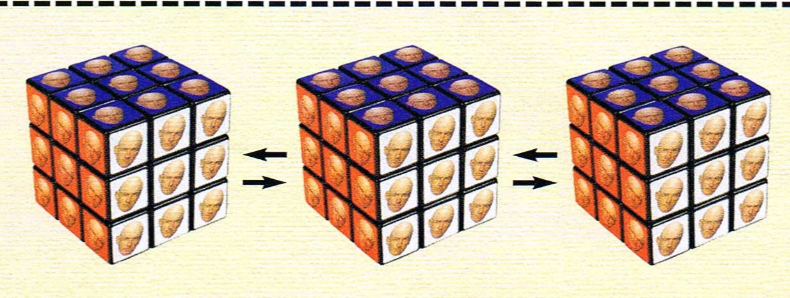
**4.00PM**
*With tons of news, game reviews and stuff all translated and approved, we can now post it all onto the site using computer trickery. We update the site every weekday, and getting all that content live is a brow-furrowing process of uploading, checking, checking again, checking once more just to be safe, then getting sacked for spelling 'GameCube' without the big 'C'.*

**6.00PM**
*With everything 'live' on the site, the writing recommences – there's loads of stuff outside of the regular news that needs penning, such as:*
- *'Static' website text (eg, the text you see on clickable buttons, the Site Help page, and other rarely-changed bits of the site).*
- *Texts for 'microsites' – game-specific sites such as www.supermariosunshine.co.uk, with game info, tips, and screenshot and video captions all their own.*
- *Newsletters – we send loads of these out to people registered with the site, so me and Rick have to work like otters to cram the latest game news into bite-size emailable form.*

**8.00PM**
*Home time! The dreamy TimeSplitters 2 has been keeping me company most evenings recently, and I also enjoy watching the Bavarian version of Stars In Their Eyes.*



## LEX LUTHOR'S SOLVE MY MAZE





## WIN A MUFFIN!

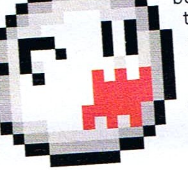
**Send your solutions to:**
Solve my Maze, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA12BW
**OR EMAIL:** ngc@futurenet.co.uk
Last month's winner: Chris Roberts, Birmingham

# THE EVOLUTION OF...

# THE BOO

Try as they might, the Mushroom Kingdom's supernatural funsters rarely get the better of Mario...

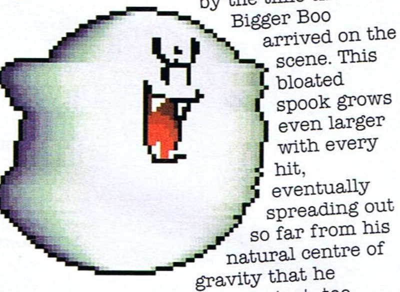
**1 BOO DIDDLY** The lowest form of Boo, first seen in Super Mario Bros 3, has haunted almost every Mario game since. Refuses to look Mario in the eye, but more than happy to try to assassinate him from behind.
**Fatal flaw...** Terminal shyness.



**2 BOO BUDDY** Another dastardly Boo plan that didn't quite work. By turning into solid blocks, Boo Buddies could fool Mario into jumping on them. Unfortunately, that was exactly what he did, happily accepting the helping hand before jumping off moments later, en route to Bowser's lair. Nice.
**Fatal flaw...** Doing more good than harm.

**3 THE BIG BOO** Since weight of numbers did little to deter the seemingly ghost-proof plumber, the Boos decided to wheel out their biggest, fattest weapon. With no fear of eye-contact, the Big Boo couldn't fail.
**Fatal flaw...** Putting a ghost that's allergic to chuckable blocks in a room constructed entirely of chuckable blocks.

**4 THE BIGGER BOO** Lessons had clearly not been learned by the time the Bigger Boo arrived on the scene. This bloated spook grows even larger with every hit, eventually spreading out so far from his natural centre of gravity that he explodes. Scared of eye contact, too.
**Fatal flaw...** Not quite elastic enough.



**5 BOO GUY** If you can't do it properly, get somebody else to have a go. Undead Shy Guys aren't quite as bashful as real Boos, and can cruise straight ahead without so much as blinking.
**Fatal flaw...** Straight ahead? No problem. Turning corners? Erm...





**6 BOO MAN BLUFF** Cover your eyes and nobody can see you. Boo Man Bluff overcame his fear by wearing a blindfold, giving him the confidence to hunt Yoshi and Baby Mario face-to-face.
**Fatal flaw...** Being blindfolded, he has to hunt by hearing – and Boos don't have ears.

**7 CAROUSEL BOO** They really don't get much smarter, these Boos. When Mario went 3D they wheeled out their biggest, least mobile comrade, stuck him on a carousel, and watched, dumbstruck, as Mario butt-slammed him back to the grave.
**Fatal flaw...** Fat Boos just don't cut it.

**8 TENNIS BOO** At long last, we have a winner! This Boo might not have had the hardest serve or the meanest backhand in the game, but it could curl the ball tighter than a camel's arse in a sandstorm.
**Winning formula...** Adopting sports instead of violence.

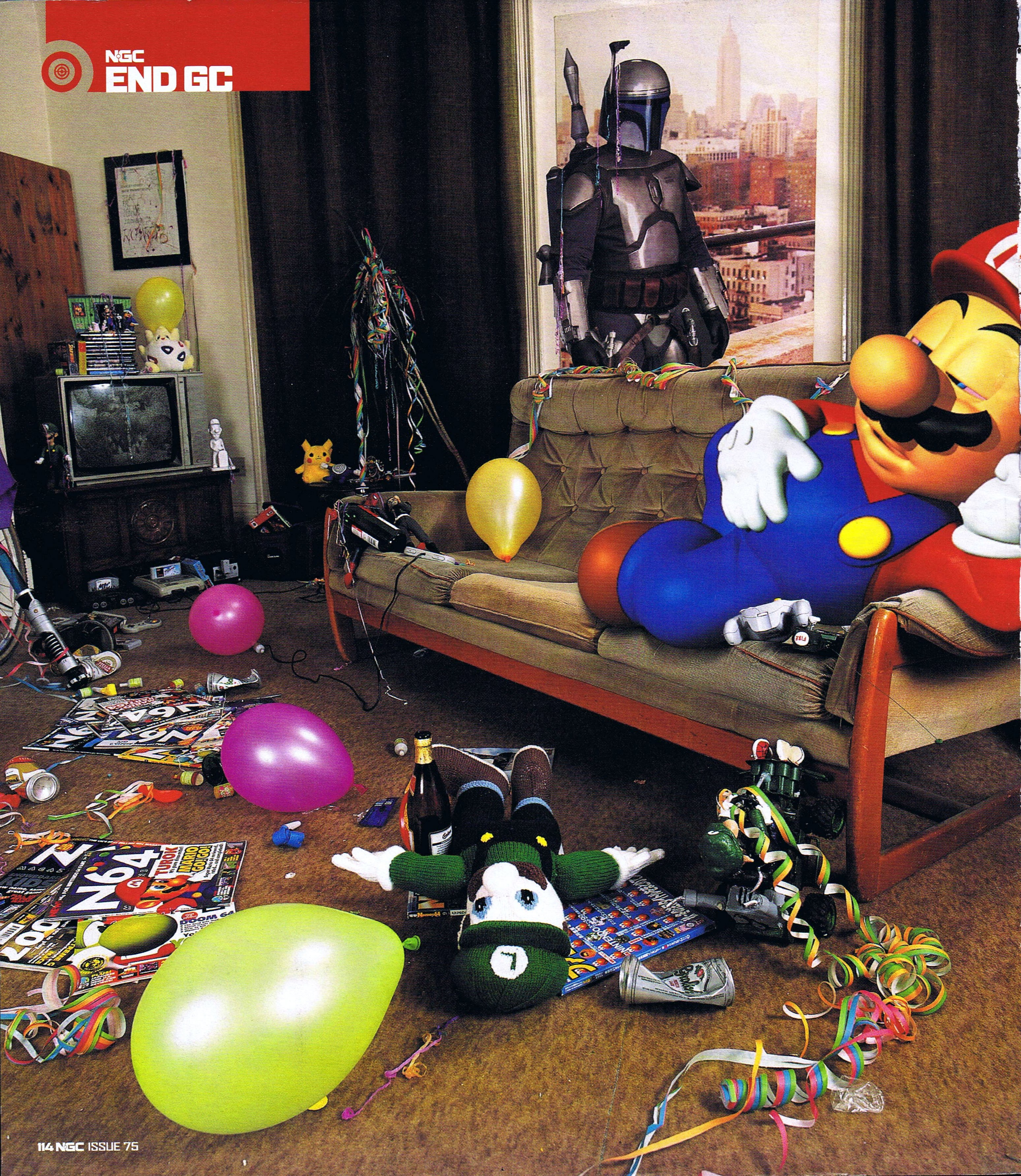
**9 KING BOO** Finally, the mastermind behind the whole Boo operation. King Boo gave his all, and his traps made Luigi shake like a meths-swilling tramp on an electrified park bench. But once again, a lack of common sense proved costly. Should have tried football instead.
**Fatal flaw...** Failing to write 'Front' and 'Back' on his Bowser head.

## NGC TOP10

### MINI GAMES THAT DIDN'T MAKE THE CUT IN MARIO PARTY 4

1. **THE BUTTON MASH** Ready... Steady... Mash! Four players mash, mash, mash their A-buttons. Hilarity ensues.
2. **TOAD'S EYE GOUGE** As punishment for failing at the Button Mash, Toad removes one of the loser's eyes with a dirty, rusty spoon.
3. **HANNIBAL CREEP** Tip-toe away from a sleeping cartoon Hannibal 'The Cannibal' Lecter. Wake him and he yells, "Oodles! Oodles!"
4. **LEX LUTHOR'S SOLVE MY MAZE** Mario and co have fun contemplating abstract concepts and complete, utter nonsense.
5. **KISS CHASE** In which Peach has to escape the slobbering attention of Wario. If no player has Peach, Luigi makes a willing stand-in.
6. **MOONLIGHT SHADOW** Four players sit and appreciate Mike Oldfield's guitar solo, with the winner being the person who enjoyed it the most.
7. **I AM GNOME** A dressing-up game, in which Mario pulls a flasher's mac over his head and sticks Pikachu in the neck-hole.
8. **HOOVER DAMN** Wait until Luigi's back is turned, then paint swastikas all over his vacuum cleaner box. Watch him flee to Germany.
9. **POO LOLLY** Our heroes comb a playing field in search of dog eggs, then plant a lolly stick in each one they find.
10. **RUSSIAN ROULETTE** A light-hearted game licensed from the movie The Deer Hunter. Christopher Walken stars as a grim, unhinged Mario.







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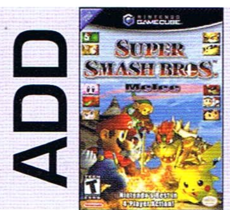
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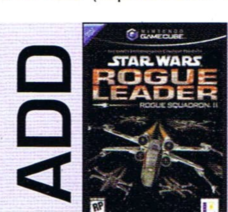
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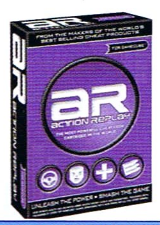
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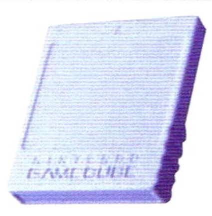
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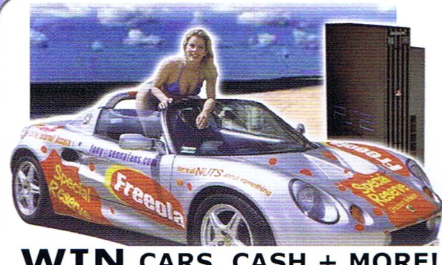
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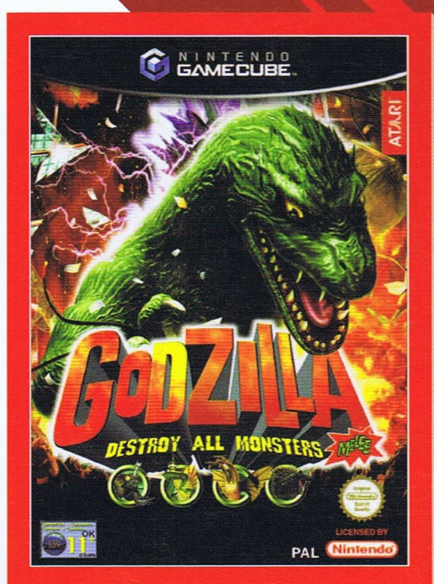


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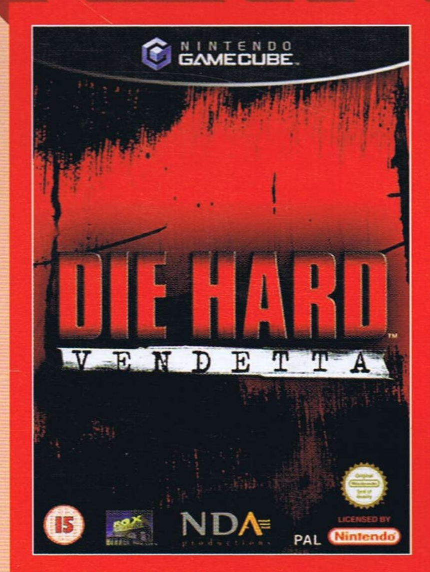
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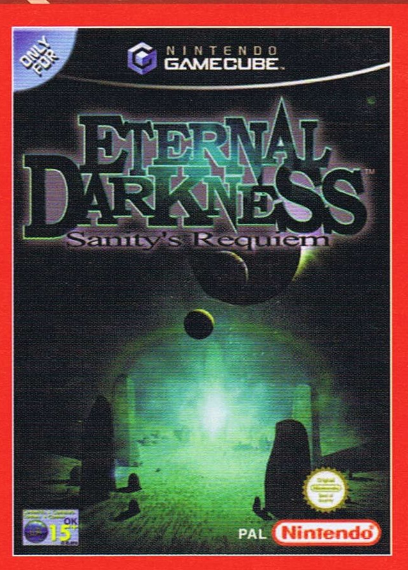




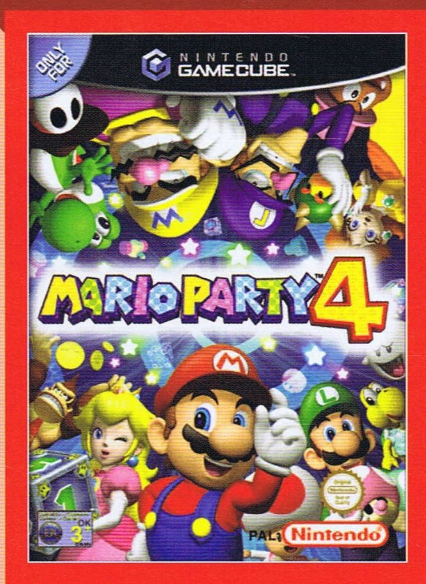
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